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THE
SOURCE AND AUTHORITY
OF
DIVINE REVELATION

J. Mr. May
with Mrs. Gordon's best compliments

DIVINE REVELATION.

THE
EVIDENCE AND AUTHORITY
OF
DIVINE REVELATION.

THE
EVIDENCE AND AUTHORITY
OF
Divine Revelation.

BEING A VIEW OF THE
TESTIMONY
OF THE
LAW AND THE PROPHETS
TO THE
Messiah,
WITH
THE SUBSEQUENT TESTIMONIES.

~~~~~  
BY  
ROBERT HALDANE.

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To HIM give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever  
believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.—*Acts x. 43.*

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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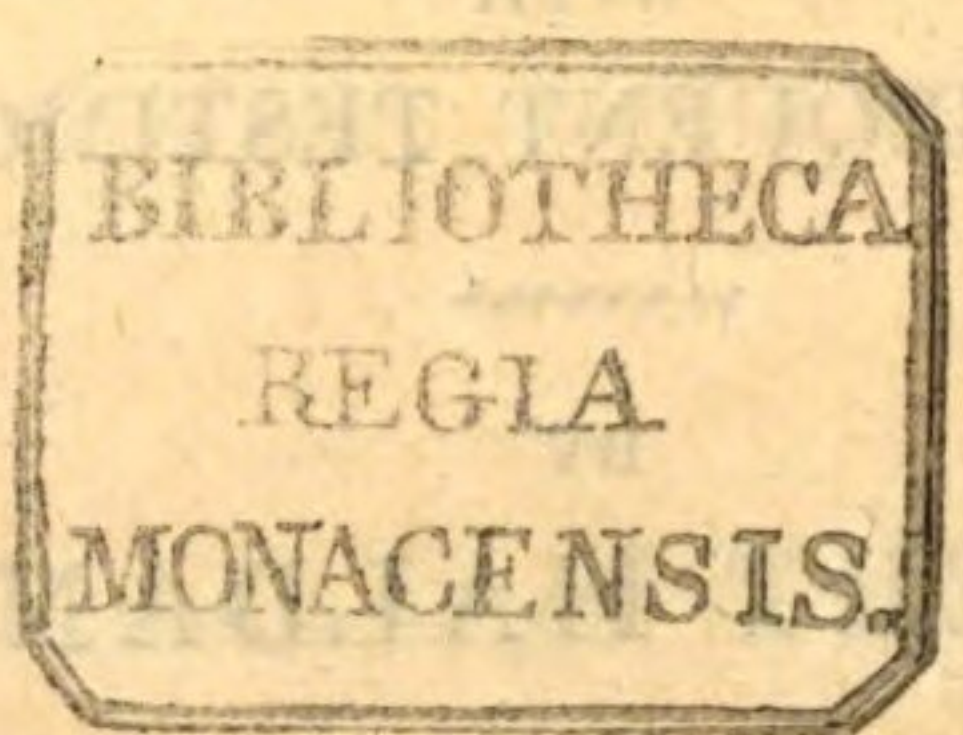
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THE  
EVIDENCE AND AUTHORITY  
OF THE  
BIBLICAL  
TESTIMONY

OF THE  
LAW AND THE PROPHETS

TO THE  
MISSION



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OF

## THE FIRST VOLUME,

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## INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the various appearances which human nature presents, there is none more remarkable than the little attention that is paid to what relates to a future state. This does not arise from indifference to futurity, to the concerns of which all men are very much alive. It can only be accounted for by the prevailing disbelief of a state of existence beyond the grave.

The persuasion, indeed, of such an existence, whether derived from tradition, or in whatever way impressed, is so congenial to the human mind, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate it altogether. But where distinct knowledge on this subject, communicated by divine revelation, does not exist, this persuasion is so general and undefined, that, being easily over-



borne by sceptical reasonings, by the business and pleasures of life, or by surrounding example, it seldom produces much effect. In this situation, multitudes are brought to the conclusion, that nothing certain can be known respecting a future world. They therefore resolve to make the most of the present life, and to take their chance of another, along with many whose judgment and character they highly respect. To this they add some general maxims; that they are not worse than others, perhaps in many things more correct; that God is merciful, and that he never could have formed creatures finally to be condemned and rendered miserable.

In every other concern of human life, the folly and danger of such a plan would at once be manifest. Eager inquiry, in proportion to the importance of the object, would be made without delay, to know whether any thing like certainty could be obtained, or at least to ascertain the best probabilities. And it is not to be supposed, that such a body of evidence as Christianity presents, would be lightly set aside or overlooked. But the man who makes up his mind, in regard to his future condition, on the above principles, stakes his all against that evidence.



For if the Bible be not a fiction, although he may gain the world, he will lose his soul. Nor are there many such who can plead that they have paid any adequate attention to this evidence. Some difficulty in the system of Christianity strikes their minds, which, without a thorough examination, appears of sufficient weight to excuse them from further enquiry on a subject to which they find themselves very much disinclined. Or they have rashly concluded, that, if the Christian religion had in reality come from God, its truth must have been supported by evidence so clear as to require no trouble in its examination. Yet this would be contrary to almost every thing with which we are acquainted. Knowledge of those things that are most necessary for us, must be acquired by diligence and attention.

The Christian religion is founded on the fact, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. "If Christ be not raised," says Paul, "your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins,—but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." The truth of this fact is not only of the utmost importance, but is supported by greater variety and strength of evi-



dence, than that of any other event that ever happened. Had this been otherwise, Christianity never could have obtained the place it holds, in spite of all the opposition it has met with. For never has any other truth been so generally and so violently opposed ; yet never did any thing besides produce such a change in the world, as the Christian religion has effected.

Much may be said respecting the necessity of a divine revelation, by those who are ignorant that one has been made, or are unacquainted with what it contains. But it is only from revelation itself, that the urgency of that necessity to man can be fully known. This subject is therefore considered in the following pages in the light which the Scriptures afford. Various proofs of the truth of the Scriptures are afterwards produced in a regular series, which exhibits the subject in one connected view. In collecting these proofs, the author has freely made use of whatever he has met with in other books, which he judged fit for his purpose. Particular attention is paid to the correspondence between the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This is a subject of the highest importance, and ought to be studied by Christians with the greatest di-



ligence. The more they examine it, the more reason they will find to bless God for that abundant, it may be said overpowering, evidence which he has provided in his own word. This evidence connects with every thing that relates to the doctrine of Christ. Other testimonies to the truth of the Gospel may be also connected with its doctrine, in such a way as, by the blessing of God, will conduce much to the Christian's edification; and this has been constantly aimed at, and earnestly desired, in all that follows.



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 God will produce truth to the Christian's mind.  
 Others will also be produced, which will be  
 and are already doing so in the hearts of the  
 disciples, on this subject. However, we are not  
 dissatisfied by this, from that dependence it was  
 imposed on the church, that it should be God that  
 should be the final arbiter, that judgment should be the  
 standard of truth, and the standard  
 which should be now incurred. If they  
 were to be, the same would be incurred on the  
 same terms, the same would be incurred on the  
 same terms, and would be incurred on the  
 same terms. If the standard in which we  
 would have that we be placed, must be made  
 known to him, the way ground the new state  
 of things would be purchased, and on what  
 footing the reward of intercourse with his Gospel  
 should afterwards be maintained, no more in  
 testimony could discover. A civil revelation  
 was given in testimony, and this is



## CHAP. I.

### *The Necessity of a Divine Revelation.*

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As soon as man rebelled against God, that relation in which he had formerly stood, when holy and obedient, was necessarily at an end. His dependence on his Creator, however, was not dissolved by sin. From that dependence it was impossible he could set himself free. God had declared to him, that punishment should be the consequence of transgression, and the condemnation threatened he had now incurred. If, then, through mercy, the sentence pronounced on him was to be suspended or mitigated, and punishment warded off, the situation in which man would in that case be placed, must be made known to him. On what ground this new state of things should be introduced, and on what footing the renewed intercourse with his Creator should afterwards be maintained, no created intelligence could discover. A divine revelation was therefore absolutely necessary, and this re-



velation was graciously vouchsafed. Intercourse with God was in consequence restored, and those of the children of men who listened to the annunciation of mercy "called upon the name of the Lord."

By means, however, of too great an intimacy of the worshippers of God with those who disregarded the promised blessing, a great and general apostacy at length took place. In order to check this, a whole generation, with the exception of one family, was swept from the face of the earth by a flood. This signal visitation was much calculated to overawe men's minds, and to preserve those who survived in the steady expectation of the accomplishment of that promise of a Saviour which God had given, the benefits of which, by anticipation, they already enjoyed.

A general departure from God, however, again took place, and the world was fast sinking into a total forgetfulness, not only of the predicted blessing, but even of God himself, as the Creator and upholder of all things. Again in mercy he interposed. Abraham was called, to whom in a peculiar manner God revealed himself, and gave him special promises of that blessing, which through him should come upon all nations. In addition to this, he separated one branch of



Abraham's posterity from the other nations, and placing his descendants in that line in such circumstances as secured the maintenance of his worship among them, gave them a written law.

As far as the knowledge of God extended among other nations, it was maintained at this period by oral tradition. Had men made a proper use of it, this would have been amply sufficient till the appearance of the predicted Saviour. And on this ground, it would seem, no injunction was given to others to join themselves to the people of Israel. That nation, indeed, was favoured with very superior advantages; and any one who offered himself, and submitted to their law, they were bound to receive among them. But, from local and particular circumstances, the dispensation under which Israel was placed was not calculated, as it was not intended, to be universal.

In the history of Israel, we read of individuals among the other nations, who, in the enjoyment and application of that knowledge which they had received, worshipped and walked with God; but gradually this light grew more and more obscure. It was not fully and clearly transmitted from generation to generation, as it ought to have been. Men, in general, intent on the va-



nities of this present life, neglected those rays of celestial light which had emanated from God, and which would have conducted them to immortality. In this respect, as in every other, analogous to all we daily see in the course of providence, the children suffer for the sin and negligence of their parents. At the same time, under the righteous government of God, no man is punished beyond what he personally deserves.

Men in every age are without excuse, not indeed because they are unacquainted with what they could not have known unless it had been communicated to them ; but because they do not act up to what they do know, and because they do not know all that they might know. Of that law which was originally written on the heart, although much effaced, deep traces still remain. Every man has a degree of knowledge of right and wrong ; his thoughts “ accusing or else excusing ” him. But all men, as their consciences bear witness, break this law. It therefore stands equally true with respect to all who have only this rule within, as with respect to those who have also a written law, that “ by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

It is often asked, are the Heathens to be con-



demned for not believing the Gospel, which they never heard? The Scriptures by no means say so. But the Scriptures do say, that “as many as have sinned without law,” (viz. the written law,) “shall also *perish* without law, and as many as have sinned in the law,” (under the written law,) “shall be judged by the law.” To this declaration is immediately added, “we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all* under sin, as it is written, there is none righteous, *no not one*.” And in order to cut off every false expectation from those who had a written law, and who, in the enjoyment of this superior advantage, might suppose they stood on firm ground, it is further said, “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

Much may be known respecting God without the written law. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” “The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power



and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse."

But notwithstanding these intimations of the supremacy of God, and notwithstanding the law written on the heart, and the original revelation given to man, the nations of the world became utterly corrupted. Idolatry, in one form or other, spread over all the earth. Innumerable deities were feigned, of the worst characters, and infamous for the most enormous crimes. They were represented by their worshippers as guilty of drunkenness, incest, rapes, adulteries, thefts, and quarrels. They were, in short, monsters of cruelty, lewdness, and profligacy. Of these deities, statues and pictures were formed, and set up in temples which were dedicated to them.

The religious worship of the most civilized idolaters corresponded with the characters of their gods. It consisted in the vilest and most detestable rites. Human sacrifices were frequently offered on their altars. Many of their temples were places of avowed prostitution. Fornication and drunkenness formed part of the worship of Venus and Bacchus. Strabo relates, that the temple of Venus at Corinth was exceedingly rich, so as to have in property more than a thousand harlots, the slaves or ministers of the temple,



donations made to the goddess by persons of both sexes. Hence, says he, the "city was crowded, and became wealthy." Such, according to Mr Gibbon, was the "cheerful devotion of the Pagans;" and of such as the above gods and goddesses was composed, what he terms, "the elegant mythology of the Greeks."

Just notions of God, obedience to his moral law, purity of heart, and sanctity of life, were not enforced, or once mentioned, as ingredients in their religious service. No repentance of past crimes, no future amendment of conduct, were prescribed by it. The Heathen religion, so far from giving any aid to virtue, had not the smallest connection with it. The actions of the Pagan gods, recorded in their sacred stories, were so wicked and impure, that they could not but greatly corrupt the practice of their worshippers. The morals of the people were accordingly such as might have been expected. They were wholly dissolute. Sensual indulgence, and every species of cruelty, were carried to the highest pitch. The pleasures of the table became the chief object of attention, and every thing was ransaked to gratify the appetite. The most unrestrained sensuality of every kind was practised. Fornication, and the



grossest impurity, were indulged in without restraint. Divorces were so easily obtained, and at length became so common, that marriage, under a legal name, was often the vilest and most shameless prostitution. Parents were at liberty to expose their children to perish with cold and hunger, or to be devoured by wild beasts. Exposing them was very frequently practised, and passed without punishment, and even without censure. It is recommended, in a particular instance, as a virtue, by Plutarch. The most civilized of the sages of Greece gave parents permission, by law, to kill their children. Suicide was recommended and sanctioned, by the practice of men of the first and most esteemed characters.

Wars were carried on with the greatest ferocity. Whole cities and nations were extirpated by fire and sword. Thousands of the vanquished were put to death in cold blood. In the midst of the ceremony of a public triumph, the general of the vanquished army, if taken alive, was put to death, and a pause was made in the triumph till his execution took place. In their battles, the combatants seldom gave quarter, but in the hopes of profit, by making slaves of their prisoners, who were thus condemned to perpetual bondage. This being the case, we may judge



of the nature of their conflicts. Instances occur of cities besieged, whose inhabitants, rather than open their gates, murdered their wives and children, and rushed themselves on a voluntary death.

Above two-thirds of the whole inhabitants of the most civilized countries are computed to have been slaves. Those who were in this unhappy situation, were treated in the most barbarous manner. Their masters had absolute power over them, and might scourge or put them to death at pleasure. This right was exercised with so great cruelty, that laws were made, at different times, to restrain it. When punished capitally, slaves were generally crucified, with a label or inscription on their breast, intimating their crime. One of the friends of Augustus devised a new species of cruelty to slaves, throwing them into a fish-pond, to be devoured by lampreys. A chained slave for a porter was usual at Rome. For the correction of slaves, a lash was commonly hung in the stair-case. Seneca mentions, without remarking it as an instance of cruelty, that regularly about the third hour of the night, the neighbours of such persons as took their meals at a late hour, heard the noise of whips and lashes, and, upon inquiry, found they were taking



account of the conduct of their slaves, and giving them correction.

Marriage appears to have been seldom permitted to slaves. It was deemed a matter of prudence, and on this ground was recommended to give a wife to the overseer of a farm, to attach him more strongly to his master's service. But this was a peculiar indulgence to one in whom confidence was reposed. Married slaves were thought very inconvenient. Xenophon, in giving directions for the management of a farm, seems not to suppose that they are ever married. Plutarch says, that the elder Cato allowed the male slaves to have a commerce with the females in his family, upon paying a certain sum for this privilege. It was the professed maxim of Cato to sell his superannuated slaves for any price, rather than maintain what he esteemed a useless burden. The custom of exposing old, useless, or sick slaves in an island of the Tiber, there to starve, was not uncommon in Rome. Any of them who recovered, after being exposed, had their liberty given them by an edict of the Emperor Claudius, in which it was likewise forbid to kill any slave merely for old age, or sickness. If a master of a family was killed in his own house, and the murderer not discovered, all his



domestic slaves were liable to suffer capitally. A Roman nobleman, who had 400 slaves, being assassinated by one of them, the whole, without exception, were put to death. At the funerals of the rich, often great numbers of their slaves were slain as victims pleasing to their departed spirits. Were there no other proof of the manner in which slaves were treated, than the fact that, in the salubrious climates of Italy and Greece, they did not keep up their numbers, that alone would be sufficient. So far from multiplying, the stock of slaves could not be maintained without immense recruits from the remoter provinces.

Where slaves were so inhumanly treated, compassion to the poor is not to be looked for. Of any institution in the Pagan world, provided or sanctioned by their religion or government for the relief of the sick, the infirm, or the helpless, not a trace is to be found. The laws of Israel enjoined the greatest kindness and compassion to the poor, and that the most liberal assistance should be afforded to those who were in want. But, under the Messiah's reign, every thing of this kind, according to the predictions of the prophets, was to be carried into the fullest effect. Accordingly, the first regular institution for the



relief of the poor, is to be found in the church at Jerusalem. On every Christian church throughout the world, the same duty was enforced, and the same means provided for its being executed. Christians were commanded "with quietness to work," not only that they might "eat their own bread," but that "they might have to give to those that needed." On the first day of the week, every one was to "lay by him in store" for this purpose, "as God had prospered him;" and persons among them were appointed to distribute their liberality. In every country to which Christianity has extended its benign influence, and in proportion as it has prevailed, numberless benevolent institutions have been provided for the relief of those in distress, nothing similar to which existed in the Heathen world.

The greatest proof of deliberate cruelty among the civilized heathens, was the shows of gladiators. Gladiators, composed of captives, of slaves, and of condemned criminals, were regularly trained for the purpose, and then brought out by thousands in the immense amphitheatres, where they were compelled to cut one another in pieces, for the entertainment of people of every rank. At the gladiatorial shows, sometimes twenty or thirty thousand men were slain in a



month. The Emperor Trajan, who was very fond of these entertainments, gave shows of gladiators after one of his victories, in which ten thousand of these devoted victims combated. Not only the men, but even the women, were passionately fond of these shows. With what truth do the Scriptures declare, that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty !" Emphatically Satan is called "the god of this world ;" and surely these were among the works of the devil, which the Son of God was manifested to destroy.

But it may be asked, could philosophy do nothing to stem this overwhelming torrent of superstition, sensuality, debauchery, and cruelty ? So far from any thing being done by philosophy in the way of restraint, it was when philosophy was most cultivated, and brought to the highest point which it appears to have been capable of attaining, that these enormous evils prevailed most. Those who called themselves philosophers, were separated into various sects. These may be divided generally into two great classes. Both felt the pressure of evil and sorrow in this life ; but neither were able to discover a remedy. In this situation, the one class sought a refuge in sensuality and extreme indulgence,



“Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” The other, wrapping themselves up in pride, taught men to brave the ills of life as not worthy the consideration of a wise man.

Most of the philosophers who were not sceptics, acknowledged one God as superior to the rest. According, however, to some of the most enlightened among them, the first and highest God was not concerned in the creation. It was commonly supposed, that the world owed its origin to chance. Much was ascribed to “matter,” or to what they called “fate.” Cicero would not allow that God created the matter out of which the universe was made, and often speaks as if he believed there was a plurality of gods. Socrates, the most enlightened among the ancient philosophers, represents the worshipping of the gods as the first and most universal law of nature. The last order he gave before he expired, was to sacrifice, in his name, a cock to Esculapius. Thus he died in the profession of idolatry, without daring to assert the unity of God, and the vanity of idols. That he died a martyr, says Bishop Horsley, to the doctrine of the unity of the divine substance, is a vulgar error. Aristotle affirmed, that though there was one eternal first mover, yet the stars are also true eternal deities.



He likewise denied, that providence extends its care to things below the moon.

Respecting the immortality of the soul and a future state, those of the philosophers who did not disbelieve them altogether, were in entire uncertainty; and of a resurrection, they seem to have formed no idea. On the two former points, the most enlightened among them never came to any fixed opinion. “Whilst I shall exist,” says Cicero, “I shall not be troubled at any thing, seeing I am free of all fault; and if I shall not exist, I shall be deprived of all sense.” Seneca thought the soul could last only for a determined period; for a time was to come when a general conflagration would take place, and all things be reduced to their primitive chaotic state. Socrates concludes a long discussion relative to the state of souls after death, by saying, “That these things are so as I have represented them, it does not become any man of understanding to affirm.” Such is the strain of conjecture and uncertainty in which he continued to speak to the last. Plutarch having spoken of the cares and troubles of life, and quoted some passages respecting them from the poets, says, “If such then be the condition of human life, as they speak of, why do we not rather applaud their good for-



tune who are freed from the drudgery of it, than pity and deplore them, as some men's folly prompts them to do? Socrates said, that death was like either to a very deep sleep, or to a journey taken a great way and for a long time, or to the utter extinction of soul and body; and, if we examine each of these comparisons, we shall find that death is not an evil upon any account; for if death be sleep, and no hurt happens to those who are in that innocent condition, it is manifest that neither are the dead ill dealt with." Speaking of Homer, Plutarch observes, "In another place, he saith, death is made of iron, thereby intimating to us that it is insensible; neither hath he spoken much amiss." A little after, Plutarch adds, "The words of Socrates to his judges, seem to me to be spoken even with inspiration. 'To fear death, is nothing else than to counterfeit the being wise when we are not so; for he that fears death, pretends to know what he is ignorant of; for no man is certain, whether death be not the greatest good that can befall a man, but they positively dread it as if they were sure it was an evil.'" In consistency with this ignorance of the philosophers respecting a future state, the Greek and Roman poets urge men to a full indulgence of their appetites, on the con-



sideration that life is short, and that death will entirely terminate our existence.

The philosophers admitted their own ignorance, and the necessity there was for further instruction. Socrates meeting Alcibiades going to the temple to pray, dissuaded him from it, because he knew not how to do it till one should come to teach him. "It is altogether necessary," says he, "that you should wait for some person to teach you how you ought to behave yourself, both to the gods and men." Plato tells the Athenians, that they would remain in a state of sleep for ever, if God did not out of pity send them an instructor. Cicero says, "I do not suppose that Arcesilas engaged in dispute with Zeno out of obstinacy, or a desire of superiority, but to show that obscurity, under which all things lie, and which forced Socrates to a confession of his ignorance. And all those who in a manner were enamoured with Socrates; such also as Democritus, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and almost all the antients, were reduced to the same confession. They *all* maintained that no true insight could be acquired; nothing clearly perceived or known: that our senses were limited, our intellect weak, and the course of man's life short." According to Democritus, truth lay buried in the depths of



the sea, or in a well without a bottom. Such was the utter uncertainty into which these philosophers had reasoned themselves respecting the nature of God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state, the most important of all subjects, of which barbarians, keeping closer to early tradition, were not nearly so ignorant. Here we may adopt the words of Gibbon, which we should scarcely have expected from such a quarter.

“ Since, therefore, the most sublime efforts of philosophy can extend no farther than feebly to point out the desire, the hope, or, at most, the probability, of a future state, *there is nothing except a divine revelation* that can ascertain the existence, and describe the condition, of the invisible country which is destined to receive the souls of men after their separation from the body. But we may perceive several defects inherent to the popular religions of Greece and Rome, which rendered them very unequal to so arduous a task. 1. The general system of their mythology was unsupported by any solid proofs; and the wisest among the Pagans had already disclaimed its usurped authority. 2. The description of the infernal regions had been abandoned to the fancy of painters and of poets, who peopled them with many phantoms and monsters, who dispersed



their rewards and punishments with so little equity, that a solemn truth, the most congenial to the human heart, was oppressed and disgraced by the absurd mixture of the wildest fictions. 3. The doctrine of a future state was scarcely considered among the devout Polytheists of Greece and Rome as a fundamental article of faith. The providence of the gods, as it related to public communities rather than to private individuals, was principally displayed on the visible theatre of the present world. The petitions which were offered on the altars of Jupiter or Apollo, expressed the anxiety of their worshippers for temporal happiness, and their ignorance or indifference concerning a future life. The important truth of the immortality of the soul was inculcated with more diligence, as well as success, in India, in Assyria, in Egypt, and in Gaul."

If such was the ignorance of the philosophers in point of religion, its worship, and its sanctions, of the immortality of the soul and a future state, what, it may be enquired, were their opinions respecting morals? These, as might be expected, entirely corresponded with their religious notions. Pride and vanity were their ruling principles. They commend and justify suicide.



Scarcely one of them condemns the exposing of infants. Plato prescribes a community of wives; and the exposing and destroying the children of mothers older than forty, and allows of drunkenness at the feasts of Bacchus. Cicero pleads for fornication, as having nothing blameable in it, and as a thing universally allowed and practised, which he had never heard was condemned, either in ancient or modern times. The flagitious and impure practices of the heathen world, are publicly avowed and celebrated by their most admired poets. Plutarch, in his book of Morals, discoursing on the training of children, represents himself as entirely at a loss in one part of the subject; and speaks of parents as “of a peculiar humour, and of a sour and morose temper,” who resisted, with respect to those who had the training of their sons, what was the predominant disgrace of the civilized heathens, the guilt of which Gibbon charges on the first fifteen Roman Emperors, with the exception of Claudius, who lived in incest. “I am tender,” adds Plutarch, “of being the persuader or encourager of such a practice. But on the other side, when I call to mind Socrates, and Plato, and Xenophon, and Eschines, and Cebes, with a whole troop of other such men, who have approved . . . I am,



again, of another mind, as much inclined by the zeal I have for the honour of such great persons."

After the above, we cannot be surprised at being assured by writers of their number, that none were more scandalous in their manners, than the philosophers by profession of all sects. In short, as Lord Hailes has observed, "*the profligacy of the heathens in the Apostolical age was more enormous than some people know, or at least are inclined to confess.*"

After observing the opinions and practices of the heathen philosophers, respecting religion and moral conduct, it is needless in the view of enquiring into their qualifications, as instructors and reclaimers of mankind, to examine those parts of their speculations which are consistent with reason and virtue. To recommend and enforce virtue, they wanted sanctions of sufficient authority, and were ignorant of right motives. In respect to rewards in a future state, their opinions were various and contradictory; and all idea of future punishments were discarded by them. Cicero affirms, that it was held universally by all the philosophers, that God could neither be angry nor hurt any one. He owns the consequence of this universal principle, that it quite overthrew the notion of divine punishments; and says in regard



to an oath, that a perjured man need not fear the wrath of heaven.

“ Their motives to the practice of virtue were absurd and illegitimate. One followed it for the love of fame and reputation ; another, for the intrinsic beauty of its nature ; a third, for the benefit of its effects ; a fourth, for that the laws of his country required it ; a fifth, for he knew not why. But none practised it on its true principle, conformity to the will of God, from whence glory to him naturally proceeds. Again, they were as much mistaken in man’s ability. They pretended, that they had the whole exercise of virtue in their power, by the mere force and rectitude of their own nature, without any aid or assistance from the Deity. The stoics, a sect which, of all others, most cultivated the science and practice of morality, were so far from seeking the assistance of Heaven, that, with an unparalleled extravagance, they placed their wise man in a rank superior to their gods, as having in him something of higher strength and fortitude ; for that he persevered in virtue amidst a thousand difficulties and discouragements, whereas the virtue of the gods had no temptations to shake it. In a word, such utter strangers were they in general, both to the na-



ture of God and man, that Cicero, delivering the sentiments of ancient wisdom on this matter, expresses himself to this effect : “ All the commodities of life,” says he, “ are the gift of heaven, but virtue no man ever yet thought came from God. For, who ever returned him thanks that he was good and honest ? And why should he ? for virtue is of right our own praise, and that in which man reasonably glories. This, in short, is the opinion of all the world, that the goods of fortune are to be asked of heaven, but that wisdom is to be had only from ourselves.”

But, even had these philosophers understood the proper motives, and been able to enforce the practice of virtue, they wanted the *inclination*. They proceeded on a systematic exclusion of the body of the people from all the means of moral and religious instruction. Instead of attempting to enlighten the multitude, all the influence which they derived from their knowledge was employed to rivet on their minds the authority of the most degrading superstitions. The vulgar and unlearned, they contended, had no right to truth. All of them, without distinction, held it as a fixed maxim, that no alteration was to be made either in the established faith or worship. This was the express doctrine of Pythagoras,



Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Epictetus, Seneca, and all the other great names of antiquity. Philosophers, statesmen, magistrates, and every one remarkable, whether for office or station, worshipped the gods in common with the people, according to the established mode. "The philosophers," says Mr Gibbon, "diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers; devoutly frequented the temples of the gods; and sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes." Their want of integrity, and of any settled good principle, is strikingly manifest in this temporising conduct. Convinced of the folly and falsehood of the vulgar superstitions, they not only conformed to them themselves, but taught their disciples to do the same. Thus they made hypocrisy and dissimulation, in so important a matter, an essential part of their instructions, confirmed them by their example, and perpetuated the most stupid idolatry connected with the most abominable vices.

"These ideas of the philosophers of Europe," says Robertson, "were precisely the same which the Brahmins had adopted in India, and according to which they regulated their conduct with



respect to the great body of the people. Wherever the dominion of false religion is completely established, the body of the people gain nothing by the greatest improvements in knowledge. Their philosophers conceal from them, with the utmost solicitude, the truths which they have discovered, and labour to support that fabric of superstition which it was their duty to have overturned.\*

How different are the principles in this, as in every other respect, on which the revelation of God proceeds! The Scriptures, from beginning to end, are delivered in a manner level to the capacity of all. From the first they were not only open to the people, but all were enjoined to read and to study them. It was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Messiah's reign, that "to the poor the Gospel was preached." So far from acting like the heathen philosophers, "who kept back the truth in unrighteousness," and on system excluded their fellow creatures from every means of intellectual improvement, Jesus and his apostles, without making any distinction, delivered their instructions to the whole body of the people.

What has been already advanced, is sufficient to prove the utter unfitness of the heathen phi-

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\* Disquisitions on India.



losophers, both in respect to character, knowledge, and inclination, to reclaim mankind from vice, and to bring them back to the worship and service of God. But one point on this subject still remains to be brought forward, and that the most essential of all. They were altogether ignorant of "the way of man's acceptance with God." This important question was never made the subject of their consideration. Had then their lives been as pure as they were profligate, their moral system as complete as it was imperfect and erroneous, and their knowledge of a future state as clear as it was defective and perplexed, they would still have been blind guides, and totally unfit for the office of religious instructors.

The knowledge of God that may be attained from his works, and the convictions of duty which arise from what remains of the law written on the heart of man, have been already noticed. To these may be added, intimations of the justice and goodness of God, the traces of which we perceive in the moral government of the world, and then we have the sum of what has been called "natural religion." Of this natural religion what then is the amount? In the works of creation, and in the moral government of the world, the eternal power and Godhead, the wisdom, and justice, and good-



ness of the Supreme Creator, appear. But the connection, the harmony, and the limits of his justice and goodness, cannot in this way be ascertained. The present is evidently a mixed state, in which there is much confusion. One thing appears to counteract another, and neither justice nor goodness seem to attain their full ends, far less harmoniously and entirely to combine. Enough, however, is seen and known, to leave every man "without excuse;" to bring him in guilty before God, and justly to condemn him for not acting up to what he knows to be right. But what is there in all this, to inform him of the way of a *sinner's* acceptance with God?

Every thing, by reason of the entrance of sin, is now placed on a different footing from what it originally stood on between man and his Creator. Man is guilty, and the sentence of condemnation upon him is passed. From this situation nothing but the mercy of God, combining with his infinite holiness and justice, can relieve him. But how shall it be known in what way these are to harmonize? On this the works of creation, and the law written on the heart, are entirely silent. What, then, can be said of natural religion, as a system in any way available for the salvation of man? Can



that be called religion, which, leaving him in a state of alienation from God, forsakes him at last as it found him, exposed to the divine displeasure?

If, then, to the ancient philosophers, the ministration of what is called Natural Religion had been committed, as the ministration of the old covenant was committed to Moses, still it would have been only "the ministration of death." On what terms God, who cannot "look upon iniquity," would hold fellowship with man, who daily sins, and comes short even of his own convictions of duty, how, in short, "should man be just with God," not one of them could tell. The original tradition of the way of acceptance was forgotten among them. Of the meaning of the sacrifices which were offered, they had lost all knowledge. Thick darkness had overspread their minds, and gross darkness the people. But not only were they unacquainted with the remedy, they were also ignorant of the malady of human nature.

The philosophers were as little acquainted with the radical corruption of their own hearts, as with the holiness and justice of God. Had they known the former, their vanity and presumption would have given way to abasement



and terror. Had they been acquainted with the latter, would they have dared to conform to the “abominable idolatries,” which, without exception, they countenanced? Instead of spending time in so many idle speculations of their “vain philosophy,” would not their solemn inquiry have been, “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God?”

A quotation has already been made from Cicero, which proves their deplorable ignorance, in respect to their own characters: “Whilst I exist I shall not be troubled at any thing, since *I am free of all fault.*” Here we have a picture of midnight darkness, of a mind “blinded by the god of this world.” How different a view of himself was entertained by the Apostle Paul! “I am carnal,” says he, “sold under sin. I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But he had been made acquainted with that righteousness which God had provided, and which he had joyfully accepted. It is not, therefore, on any precarious or hollow foundation of the supposed purity of his life, or of the *chance* of non-existence in a future state, that he rests. He stands,



with confidence, on a specified ground of hope :  
“ I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”—“ Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In order to form some comparative estimate of the strength of the different principles which supported the minds of these two men, both confessedly great in their way, let us view them in adverse and trying circumstances. Cicero, deserted by his friends, and in the prospect of suffering death, has nothing to rest on but the broken reed of his own rectitude, and as to futurity, he is in total darkness. Paul, in his last hours, his work done, and himself about to be put to death as an evil doer, after exhorting a fellow-labourer to endure afflictions, and to persevere in that cause for which he was now to suffer, breaks out into this triumphant exclamation, to which there is nothing comparable, or in the least degree similar, in all the works of all the philosophers : “ For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give



me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

"The Heathen philosophy comprized only idle and fruitless truths, with which the people had no concern ; or abstract and obscure speculations, with which they had no acquaintance. The philosophers themselves were a set of men, who, on the first appearance of Christianity, most violently opposed it, by all the arts of sophistry and injustice. And when, by the force of its evidence, they were driven to profess it, they immediately began to debase and corrupt it. Tertullian affirms, "that, from their profane and vain babbling, every heresy took its birth." Whenever they or their philosophy are spoken of in Scripture, it is in terms of the greatest disapprobation. Paul, after adverting to their unprincipled conduct, in keeping back from the people what they knew of God, declares, that they were "without excuse ; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man ; and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creep-



ing things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God unto a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”—“And, even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

“When therefore the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, (what the world accounts foolishness,) “to save them that believe.” From the despised country of Judea, the light of the nations at length shone forth. “Behold my Servant



whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”—  
“For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

And now, how great is the change which the Gospel has effected in the world ! The base superstitions of Pagan idolatry, and along with them much of that cruelty which prevailed, the shows of gladiators, the exposing of infants, the murdering of captives taken in war, domestic slavery, human sacrifices, and many gross abominations, are banished, and true knowledge is diffused. “Examine the most unlearned Christian concerning his soul, he will aver that it is immortal; that it shall undergo a judgment after this life; that, accordingly, it shall abide in a state of bliss, or misery everlasting. About which points, neither Socrates nor Seneca could answer any thing. Inquire of him, how things are upheld, how governed, and ordered? He will presently reply, by the powerful hand and wise providence of God. Whereas, among philosophers, one would ascribe all events to the



current of fate, another to the tides of fortune; one to blind influences of stars, another to a confused jumble of atoms. Ask him about the main points of morality and duty, and he will, in a few words, better inform you, than Cicero, or Epictetus, or Aristotle, or Plutarch, in their large tracts and voluminous discourses about matters of that nature. So real a property it is of God's law, "to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion." So true it is, that our Lord affirmeth of himself, "I am come a light into the world, that he who believeth in me may not abide in darkness."

The Gospel contains representations of God and man, and of a present and future life, entirely dissimilar from any thing known among the civilized Heathens, previous to its publication. Its spirit is directly opposed to the ideas of all the Pagan moralists, who represent the desire of revenge as a mark of a noble mind, and to whom the duty of the forgiveness of injuries, and the love of our enemies, was unknown. It has raised the standard of morals, and has effected much, even where it has interposed no express injunction; while the purity of its doctrine, the authority of its precepts, and the energy of its sanctions, produce considerable effects on multitudes, who yet



have only the name of Christian. But, above all, the true character and situation of man in the present state, the remedy provided for guilt, and the way of acceptance with God, respecting all of which the civilized Heathen world, having lost sight of early tradition, was in total darkness, are now made known. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel."

The necessity, then, of a written revelation from God, for all mankind, is manifest. The experiment of reformation, without it, had long been tried among the most civilized nations on earth. Learning and philosophy had done their utmost, and all had failed. Where is the city or village, since the world began, that was ever enlightened in the knowledge of God, by either Heathen or Infidel philosophers? It is the doctrine of the fishermen of Galilee which has subverted the altars, and dispelled the darkness of Paganism. The Christian who reads the Bible, borrows no light to his system from the writings of such men as Hume and Voltaire. And were he not in some measure acquainted with the deep depravity of the human heart, he would be astonished that, under the meridian light of divine revelation, their sentiments in religion should be so perverse, and so crude.



## CHAP. II.

*The Persecuting Spirit of Pagans.*


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HAVING said so much respecting the religion and practice of the Heathen world, it is proper, before taking leave of the subject, to notice what has been called the “mild and tolerating spirit of Polytheism,” on account of which its votaries have been so much applauded. If on this point Pagan idolaters deserved the credit they have obtained, it would be a striking contrast to all the other effects of their depraved superstition. But although the belief of their religious toleration be strongly insisted on by some, and too easily received by others, it is entirely without foundation.

The Pagan religion presented the extraordinary spectacle of more than thirty thousand



gods ; and at Rome alone, six hundred different kinds of sacred rites were exercised. The worshippers of all these gods, and the observers of these different rites, lived together, it is true, in peace, so far as respected their religious opinions. This, at first view, appears extremely amiable. It seems to warrant all that has been said to prove, that the most unbounded toleration prevailed. But, upon a closer inspection, this beautiful appearance vanishes like a cloud. Although some worshipped one set of deities, and others another ; yet, on the subject of religion, there were no opposing opinions among them. The existence and power of their several deities were equally acknowledged by all ; and not one of those numerous religions ever pretended to accuse another of falsehood.

The Romans adopted the gods of the different countries which they conquered, not doubting their power, as the tutelary deities of their several districts, to whom it was incumbent on them, as well as their interest, to render homage. So firmly were they persuaded of this, that when they laid siege to any town, it was usual to invoke the tutelary god of the place, and by promising him equal or greater honours than he then enjoyed, to bribe him to betray his former



votaries.\* Hence it is evident there was no room for persecution on the subject of religion. Men could not persecute others for serving gods whom they themselves acknowledged, and in similar circumstances worshipped. Nor had they any ground of offence against those who were equally ready to invoke the gods whom they adored. The peace, then, which subsisted among heathens, on the subject of their idolatrous worship, had nothing whatever to do with toleration. It was the necessary result of their indiscriminating notions of Polytheism.

“The various modes of worship,” says Mr Gibbon, “which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful.—The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted, with implicit faith, the different religions of the earth.—The thin texture of Pagan mythology was interwoven with various, but not discordant materials.—The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams, possessed,

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\* The Tyrians, when besieged by Alexander, put chains on the statue of Hercules, to prevent that deity from deserting to the enemy.



in peace, their local and respective influence. Nor could the Roman, who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian, who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of nature, the planets and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory.—The Greek, the Roman, and the barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves, that, under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities.”

If the foregoing representation be just, where was the boasted toleration of Polytheism? On the other hand, sufficient provision was made for the legal exercise of intolerance, both in Greece and Rome. By the laws of Athens, no strange god was admitted, or foreign worship allowed, till approved and licensed by the court of Areopagus. The Romans had a law to the same effect. Livy mentions it as an established principle of the early ages of the commonwealth, to guard against the introduction of foreign ceremonies of religion.

He says, that the prohibiting all foreign religions, and the abolishing every mode of sacrifice



that differed from the Roman mode, was a business frequently entrusted by their ancestors to the care of the proper magistrates. For nothing, he observes, could contribute so effectually to the ruin of religion, as the sacrificing after an external rite, and not after the manner instituted by their fathers. At an early period, the ædiles were commanded to take care that no gods were worshipped except the Roman gods, and that the Roman gods were worshipped after no manner but the established manner of the country. Macænas recommended to Augustus to worship the gods himself according to the established form, and to *force* all others to do the same; and to *hate* and to *punish* all those who should attempt to introduce foreign religions. The Roman custom, then, of adopting the gods of other countries, while it indicates the extent of their superstition, or the use they made of religion as a state engine, “can never shew that the religion of individuals, where it differed from public wisdom, was either connived at as a matter of indifference, or tolerated as an inalienable right of human nature.”

In as far, then, as religious persecution did not take place among the Pagans, it was owing to



there being no opportunity nor temptation to persecute. But when the Christian religion appeared, as it dissented from the established worship, and required toleration, and from the acknowledged peaceable and loyal demeanour of Christians was every way entitled to it, the total absence from the minds of Pagans of such a principle as religious toleration was immediately manifest. What Mr Gibbon calls "the mild spirit of Polytheism" was then put to the test; and Christians soon found, that any thing but toleration was to be expected. At first, indeed, persecution in different places was begun by the multitude, and Christians did not, for a while, attract the particular notice of the Roman government. But at length it commenced in that quarter, and did not remit, except at intervals, for nearly 300 years; after which the persecutions of Paganism ceased with its power.

Tacitus informs us, that the Emperor Nero inflicted exquisite punishments on those people, who, he says, were abhorred for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians. "They were condemned," he tells us, "not so much for the crime of burning the city," (which Nero had falsely laid to their charge,) "as for their enmity to mankind." Their sufferings, too,



were so contrived, that they should be exposed to scorn, and their misery rendered ridiculous. "For this purpose," he adds, "they were inclosed in the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs; or else they were fastened to crosses. Others were appointed to be set on fire; and it was so ordered, that they should, after they had been in torment all day, serve for lights by night." One should suppose that this historian, after stating such things, and adding that they were "really criminal, and deserving exemplary punishment," would bring forward some proof of their enmity to mankind, and give an account of their crimes, for which they were held in abhorrence. But not a word of this appears. No such crimes, it is well known, existed; yet, in the spirit of a persecutor, he joins in the clamour against them, and, without a shadow of reason, asserts, that "they were deserving of exemplary punishment."

This, however, it may be thought, is an example of persecution and intolerance under the reign of a tyrant, whose cruelty is proverbial. Let us turn then to the situation of Christians under Trajan, esteemed the best and greatest of the Roman Emperors, to whom the title of "Optimus" was given by the senate and the people.



Under his reign, the third persecution began, in the year 100. About the year 106, Pliny the Younger was appointed governor of Bithynia. The character of Pliny, as well as that of Trajan, is highly celebrated; and perhaps two men more deservedly esteemed, could not be selected from among the heathens. But the situation of Christians under these men was dreadful. Of this we have the most authentic evidence, under their own hands.

As soon as Pliny arrived in his province, he wrote to the Emperor for direction how to proceed in the trials of the Christians. In his letter, which the reader will afterwards see at full length under the article of "Testimonies from public edicts," Pliny declares he does not well know what is the subject either of punishment or of enquiry; what strictness ought to be used in either; whether any difference ought to be made on account of age; whether repentance should entitle to pardon; and whether the name itself, although no crimes were detected, ought to be punished. "Concerning all these things," he says, "I am in doubt." In the mean time he informs the Emperor, that he had put the question to all who were accused, whether they were Christians? "Upon confessing that they



were, I repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still persisted, I ordered away to be punished ; *for it was no doubt with me*, whatever might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished." Pliny farther says, " that he had received anonymous information against several persons, who, upon examination, denied that they were Christians, or ever had been so ; who repeated," he adds, " after me an invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image,—none of which things, as is said, they who are really Christians can by any means be compelled to do." He then gives the account he had heard of their mode of worship and orderly behaviour, and of their binding themselves to the strictest integrity in conduct. He had put to the torture two maid-servants, (deaconesses,) who belonged to them, to try what he could learn. " But," says he, " I have discovered nothing but a bad and excessive superstition." From Pliny's letter we also learn, that these severities were not the commencement, but the continuation of persecution.

Trajan, in his answer, declares, that Pliny had taken the *right method* in his proceedings with



those Christians who had been brought before him. Only he directs that they should not be sought for, and that anonymous accusations should not be received; and "if any one denies being a Christian," he adds, "and makes it evident in fact, that is by *supplicating to our gods*, though he be suspected to have been so formerly, let him be pardoned *upon repentance*." These are all the limitations in favour of the unoffending Christians, against whom Pliny, after all the pains he had taken, and the information he had received, could allege nothing, but their firm adherence to the worship of God, according to their conscience. On the other hand, the Emperor adds, "If any are brought before you, and are convicted, they ought to be punished;" and they were only to be pardoned if they renounced their religion.

Here, then, we have a specimen of Pagan intolerance. Where no crime is alleged: where, on the contrary, innocence and good conduct are unequivocally admitted, there remains "no doubt" with him, who is called the "humane Pliny," that Christians should be punished *with death*, on account of their "bad and excessive superstition," that is, merely for their religion, and their "inflexible obstinacy" in not making



supplication to "our gods," and among the rest to the image of Trajan. All this, Trajan, who is admired, and justly so in other respects, for his excellent and equitable government, confirms and commands to be executed. Whatever might be the nature of their opinion, whether good or bad, provided it was different from the Pagan religion, and consistently adhered to, they were to suffer death.

Under Marcus Antoninus, another of the best and most distinguished of the Roman Emperors, the Christians were severely persecuted. Athenagoras, in his Apology, presented to him in the year 178, tells the Emperor, that all other people experienced the benefit of his equitable government. "But we Christians," says he, "because no regard is had to us, nor any provision made for us, though we do no evil, and are in all things obedient to the divine Being and your government, are harassed and persecuted for the name only. We therefore intreat you to take care of us, that we may no longer be put to death by sycophants."

The spirit of persecution was not confined to the Emperors. It manifested itself on every opportunity among the whole body of the people. The governors of the provinces sometimes went beyond the commands of the Emperors, and is-



sued public orders that strict search should be made for the Christians. The common cry of the people at their public shows, was, "The Christians to the lions." They thirsted after their blood like those savage beasts, and were even more forward than their governors to inflict on them the most dreadful tortures. Among these was the uncus or hook, the eculeus, the palus and stipes, upon which they seem to have been impaled; also the iron chair, upon which, when heated, the victims were placed. But the most common, and to the spectators the favourite punishment, was that of exposing the Christians to the wild beasts in the circus to be torn to pieces. Such was what is called, "the mild and tolerating spirit of Polytheism."

Gibbon assigns what was probably the true reason, why, besides their not attempting to make proselytes, the Jews under the Roman government enjoyed a measure of religious freedom, which was denied to the Christians. The Jews, he says, were a *nation*; the Christians were a *sect*. This is a plain acknowledgment, that there was no toleration. That cannot be called toleration, which extends only to strangers, and not to persons who form a part of the community in which they reside. On the principles of



Paganism, too, the God of the Jews was allowed to be the tutelary Deity of their country. As a nation, therefore, they were permitted to worship God as their fathers had done. But the Christians being a sect among themselves, the Pagans would not suffer them to exercise their religion, but at the risk, and often at the expence of their lives. Let us hear Mr Gibbon himself. "The Jews were a *nation*, the Christians were a *sect*; and if it was natural for every community to respect the sacred institutions of their neighbours, it was incumbent on them to persevere in those of their ancestors. The voice of oracles, the precepts of philosophers, and the authority of the laws, *unanimously* inforced this national obligation." The principle of persecution which actuated the Pagans, is thus not only avowed but justified. Mr Gibbon's sophistry is here very thin, but it may mislead the unwary. The want of toleration in persecuting idolaters, is concealed under the idea of their persevering in the sacred institutions of their ancestors, as if they would have been prevented from this, by allowing others to act according to their conscience. Mr Gibbon, however, uses all his art to explain the fact of the persecution of the Christians, in such



a way as still to support the plea of Pagan toleration. But the truth sometimes comes out.

“The pious Christian,” he says, “as he was desirous to obtain or to escape the glory of martyrdom, expected, either with impatience or with terror, the stated returns of the public games and festivals. On these occasions, the inhabitants of the great cities of the empire were collected in the circus or the theatre, where every circumstance of the place, as well as of the ceremony, contributed to kindle their devotion, and to extinguish their humanity; whilst the numerous spectators, crowned with garlands, perfumed with incense, purified with the blood of victims, and surrounded with the altars and statues of their tutelary deities, resigned themselves to the enjoyment of pleasures, which they considered as an essential part of their religious worship. They recollected that the Christians alone abhorred the gods of mankind, and, by their absence and melancholy on these solemn festivals, seemed to insult or to lament the public felicity.—It was not among a licentious and exasperated populace, that the forms of legal proceedings could be observed; it was not in an amphitheatre, stained with the blood of wild beasts and gladiators, that the voice of compassion could be heard. The impatient clamours



of the multitude denounced the Christians as the enemies of gods and men, doomed them to the severest tortures, and venturing to accuse by name some of the most distinguished of the new sectaries, required, with irresistible vehemence, that they should be instantly apprehended, and cast to the lions."

Speaking of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, Mr Gibbon says, "During the whole course of his reign, Marcus despised the Christians as a philosopher, and *punished them as a sovereign.*" I shall only add one quotation more, but it is decisive on the question. "It was in vain that the oppressed believer asserted the unalienable rights of conscience and private judgment. Though his situation might excite the pity, his *arguments could never reach the understanding, either of the philosophic or of the believing part of the Pagan world.*"

Where, then, according to one of its principal advocates, is now "the mild spirit of Polytheism," and that universal toleration, by which it is asserted the Pagans were so much distinguished. On the contrary, we see there did not exist among them even the shadow of it. But this false plea in favour of heathenism is eagerly brought forward by such writers as Gibbon and



Hume. Mr Hume says, “ So sociable is Polytheism, that the utmost fierceness and aversion it meets with in an opposite religion, is scarce able to disgust and keep it at a distance.” He speaks of “ the tolerating spirit of idolaters” as “ very obvious,” and says, “ that the intolerance of almost all religions which have maintained the unity of God, is as remarkable as the contrary principle of Polytheists.”

When Mr Hume contrasts “ the tolerating principle of idolaters” with the “ intolerance of *almost* all religions that have maintained the unity of God,” the exception “ almost,” used for a cover, is not intended to exonerate the Christian religion. Accordingly, he soon after takes care to include Christianity, by an indirect charge against it, from the conduct of Christians. “ If,” says he, “ amongst Christians, the English and Dutch have embraced the principles of toleration, this singularity has proceeded from the steady resolution of the civil magistrate, in opposition to the continued efforts of priests and bigots.” Our attention is thus called to the tolerating principle of idolaters, and the intolerance of the Christian religion; and we are here informed, that if any Christians “ have embraced the principles of toleration, this singularity has proceeded from the steady reso-



lution of the civil magistrate." In opposition, however, to this, let us now learn from Mr Hume himself, in another part of his writings, to whom "so reasonable a doctrine," as that of toleration, OWED ITS ORIGIN.

In his History of England, in narrating the events of 1644, and speaking of the Independents in that country, Mr Hume says, "Of all the Christian sects, this was the first which, during its prosperity as well as its adversity, always adopted the principle of toleration. *And it is remarkable, that so reasonable a doctrine owed its origin, not to reasoning, but to the height of extravagance and fanaticism.*" Here, notwithstanding all he has said in his Essay on the tolerating principle of Polytheists, exalting, in this respect, Paganism at the expence of the Christian religion, he now informs us, that *more than a thousand years after Paganism had ceased to exist*, the doctrine of toleration *owed its origin*, not to the reasoning of philosophers or to Polytheists, but to a sect of Christians. Fanaticism and the Christian religion are, with this writer, synonymous terms.

It is worthy of remark, that those Christians to whom Mr Hume ascribes the origin of toleration,



had a clear understanding of the meaning of *regeneration*, that fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. Of their practical regard and adherence to that doctrine, as well as of their sentiments on toleration, Mr Bailey, who was Principal of the college of Glasgow, and who attended the Assembly of Westminster in 1643, writes, in one of his letters to Scotland, as follows: "They will admit of none to be members of their congregations, of whose true grace and regeneration they have no good evidence. By this means they would keep out all the Christian church forty for one of the members of the best reformed churches."—"Many of them preach, and some print a liberty of conscience, at least the great equity of a toleration of all religions; that every man should be permitted without any fear, so much as of discountenance from the magistrate, to profess publicly his conscience, were he never so erroneous, and also live according thereunto, if he trouble not the public peace by any seditious or wicked practice."

From this account, we learn what were the views of those Christians on toleration, and that this principle was not taken up through any accidental occurrence, but necessarily arose from



their knowledge of the nature of the Christian religion. For whoever understands the doctrine of regeneration, and acts upon it as they did, cannot, with any consistency, adopt the principles of persecution. By confounding the kingdom of Israel with the kingdom of heaven, Christians may fall into many mistakes, and have often done so. But when the distinction between these kingdoms is understood, at the foundation of which lies the doctrine of regeneration, these mistakes will be rectified. And the whole of the doctrine and precepts of that kingdom "which is not of this world," will be seen to stand directly opposed to every kind of persecution.

The servants of Jesus Christ may defy the most perspicacious opposers of their religion, to point out one word in it that gives the smallest countenance to intolerance. Here they will meet their opposers on fair and open ground—ground which the latter seldom choose to occupy. If it were possible for them to do so with any success, they would not resort to that underhand kind of warfare which Gibbon and Hume were incessantly carrying on in their writings against the Christian religion,—attacking it with the weapons of ridicule and misrepresentation, through



the mistakes or faults of Christians. Their ignorance of the nature of the religion they opposed, which is manifest in all they say on the subject, precluded them from acting the part of fair and honourable adversaries. It is mentioned, I think, in Boswell's Life of Johnson, that Mr Hume told a clergyman at Durham, that he had never read the New Testament with attention. Whether he did so or not, it is certain that he grossly misunderstood its contents.

Thus we have Mr Hume's unequivocal testimony, that the reasonable doctrine of toleration owed its origin to Christians. He is mistaken, however, in assigning its discovery to so late a period. He ought to have known that it was held by some of the early Christians, and should have traced it ultimately to the word of God. Let it no more, however, even according to Mr Hume, be sought for among Pagan idolaters. It is a principle too refined to have emanated from such a source. Like innumerable other blessings to society, it flowed from the Christian religion; and although religious intolerance may be fixed on mistaken Christians, it never can be laid to the charge of Christianity itself. Christianity has nothing to do with the persecutions of Madrid and Rome, of which Mr Hume, in his



Essay on Toleration, reminds us, nor with those which have taken place in any country. Christianity never sanctioned the shedding one drop of blood, either in its propagation or in its defence. The Emperor Julian himself, the great opponent of Christianity, declares, that "Jesus and Paul gave no such precept."

The Apostle Peter, before he was well instructed in the nature of his religion, once drew his sword to defend his Master; but Jesus said unto him, "Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels." Thus he intimated to Peter, and to all his followers to the end of time, that he did not commit to them weapons of violence to defend his kingdom; for that if he needed assistance in this matter, he would not make use of such precarious means as the power of men, but would employ more efficient instruments.

"The weapons of our warfare," said the Apostle Paul, "are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds;" and so they proved, in opposition to all the powers of the world. Whoever then knows and recollects,



“that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” and that “no man can call Jesus Christ, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,” will not suppose that shedding a man’s blood, or using violence of any kind, is the way to convert him, and to make him obedient to God. There is no need of laboured essays on toleration, to prove to the Christian, who studies the word of God, that he must not dare to use violence to promote the cause of the Gospel. Liberty of conscience to all men from each other, is there written as with a sun beam. And whenever any real Christians, misled by the prejudices of the age in which they lived, or giving way to the depraved principles natural to the human heart, have resorted to carnal weapons to propagate their religion, they have always grievously erred from the faith, and have generally pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

On the whole, the violent persecutions to which Christians were subjected, during the first three centuries, is a fact acknowledged even by those who most strenuously contend for Pagan toleration. The principles of all the other religions which the Heathen world embraced, were at bottom, really one. All of them agreed to treat sin with lenity, and to allow one another’s religion



to be right on the whole. Even those philosophers among them who denied a Providence, or such as laughed at their religious rites, themselves conformed to them; and they had no system of their own to bring forward which radically opposed the prevailing superstitions. Amidst such agreement, the absence of persecution does not deserve the name of toleration. Far less was it a proof of that mild spirit which has been falsely ascribed to Paganism. As soon as Christianity appeared, the most virulent opposition was excited.

It is always to be recollected, that this persecution was purely of a religious nature. There was nothing political in it, not even the pretence of any thing of this kind. The Christians under the Roman empire were the most peaceable citizens. Their submission to government, strictly enjoined upon them by the Scriptures, formed a prominent part of their religion. Never were the principles of any set of men put to so severe a test. From their numbers, they at length possessed the means of opposition, had they chosen to exert them. But this they never attempted.

To whatever cause the fact that Christians were singled out for persecution may be attributed, it is proper here to remark the evidence



that arises from it to the truth of the Christian religion. We are immediately reminded of the full and distinct intimations before-hand, which the Lord gave to his disciples of what they were to suffer for his sake. We see also the reason of this solemn warning, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him also will I confess before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him also will I deny before my Father which is in heaven."

There was nothing which the Lord Jesus more constantly inculcated on his disciples, than the bad reception, and violent opposition they should every where meet with, in propagating his doctrine. This would be the more necessary, as it was probably what they least expected. In becoming the messengers of the glad tidings of salvation to mankind, and in seeking to diffuse the mild, humble, and benevolent spirit of Christianity, they would naturally anticipate, that, wherever they went, they would be received with the utmost kindness and respect. But he who "knew what was in man," and he only, foresaw how different their reception would be. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth; I tell you nay, but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divi-



ded, three against two, and two against three.”  
—“ I am come to send fire on the earth ; and what will I if it be already kindled ? ” —“ The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child ; and the children shall rise up against the parents, and cause them to be put to death ; and ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. ” —“ Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. ” —“ Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. ” —“ They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons ; being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake ; *and it shall turn to you for a testimony.* ” —“ Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. ”

The force of the evidence arising from these intimations cannot be set aside. No one, without divine foreknowledge, could have foreseen that such persecution, so violent, yet so unprecedented, would take place. It cannot be reckoned among the things that are predicted from a shrewd conjecture of what is probable. From the different ways in which unbelievers, at this day, endeavour to account for it, and from the



surprise they discover that it should have taken place, we see that the ablest of them would never have dreamed of it before-hand. "It shall turn to you," said Jesus, "for a testimony." And the early Christians particularly observed and pointed out the striking evidence which arose from this quarter to the truth of their religion. They speak of it as a wonderful notice that Christ had given to his disciples, that they should be brought before kings for his sake.

"Is there any other doctrine in the world," says Origen, "whose followers are punished? Can the enemies of Christ say, that he knew his opinions were false and impious, and that therefore he might well conjecture and foretel what would be the treatment of those persons who should embrace them? Supposing his doctrines were really such, why should this be the consequence? What likelihood that men should be brought before kings and governors for opinions and tenets of any kind, when this never happened even to the Epicureans, who absolutely denied a Providence; nor to the Peripatetics themselves, who laughed at the prayers and sacrifices which were made to the Divinity? Are there any but the Christians, who, according to this prediction of our Saviour, being brought before kings and go-



vernors for his sake, are pressed, to their latest gasp of death, by their respective judges, to renounce Christianity, and to procure their liberty and rest, by offering the same sacrifices, and taking the same oaths that others did?"—"As for us, when we see every day those events exactly accomplished, which our Saviour foretold, at so great a distance, that his gospel is preached in all the world, Matt. xxiv. 14.; that his disciples go and teach all nations, Matt. xxviii. 19; and that those who have received his doctrine are brought, for his sake, before governors and before kings, Matt. x. 18; we are filled with admiration, and our faith in him is confirmed more and more."



## CHAP. III.

*The Credibility of Miracles.*

THE evidence of testimony is capable of impressing our minds with the fullest conviction of certainty. A man who has never been out of Great Britain, is, by testimony alone, as much convinced of the existence of such countries as France and America, as he is of the existence of that country in which he lives. There is no man who seriously doubts that there was such a city as ancient Rome, and that it flourished under certain forms of government. Several histories respecting it are conveyed to the present times. Certain subordinate circumstances in these histories may be feigned or misrepresented. But there are leading facts which none call in question. All, for instance, are convinced that there existed such a man as Julius Cæsar; that he lived about the time which history declares; that he wrote commentaries of many of his exploits;



and that he gave rise to a new form of government, which continued for ages, and produced very important effects. The truth of these events is conveyed to us by the general and concurrent testimony of history, by which it is so firmly established, that were a set of learned men now to arise, and, without being able to produce any ancient contradictory statements, to endeavour, by specious reasonings, to destroy our belief of it, it would argue the greatest folly and weakness to be moved by them. In like manner, the truth of other facts which happened in distant periods is substantiated, and upon such evidence almost the whole business and intercourse of human life is conducted. \*

On the same grounds of historical evidence, but in a measure much more extensive, and connected with a variety of other kinds of evidence, we are assured of the fact, that Jesus Christ appeared in the world, and that he was born, lived, and died in the country of Judea. This is at-

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\* " Probable evidence is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this, that it admits of degrees, and of all variety of them, from the very lowest presumption to the highest moral certainty. The evidence of testimony may arise to such a height, as to be perfectly equivalent to that of sense or demonstration."



tested by contemporary historians; and no man acquainted with history can deny the truth of his existence, any more than that of Julius Cæsar. The greatest enemies to Christianity are compelled to admit it. It is also a fact acknowledged on all hands, that the Christian religion which is professed at this day, took its rise from Jesus Christ, and in the age in which he lived: Till then it is never mentioned; but from that period it begins to be noticed by historians, is soon the subject of public edicts, and afterwards produces revolutions in government, both more important and more permanent than that which Julius Cæsar effected.

To diminish the force of this statement, it may be answered, that although it cannot be denied that we have the same kind of evidence of the existence of Jesus Christ as of Julius Cæsar, yet the whole tenor of the history of the latter is according to the common course of events, while that of the former is entirely different. It is true, that the history of Julius Cæsar presents nothing dissimilar to the appearances we constantly observe, and what is related of him readily accounts for all he effected. But it is equally true, that, while the divine mission of Jesus Christ must, from its nature, like the cre-



ation of the world, stand alone, the miracles that accompanied his life, and attested his doctrine, consisted in matters of fact, which, being evident to the senses of those who witnessed them, and of such a kind that they could not be mistaken, are, equally with common occurrences, the subjects of credible testimony.

It has indeed been laid down as a maxim by some, that no human testimony is sufficient to prove a miracle. A miracle has been defined to be, a work in which the stated laws of nature are departed from, suspended, or controlled. But if human testimony cannot be admitted as the proof of such a work, it must be because this work is in its nature either *impossible* or *incredible*. To affirm that a suspension or alteration of the laws of nature is impossible, is to declare that they are supreme; and their having no superior, precludes the existence of God as well as of miracles, or it represents him as subordinate to these laws. But whoever believes in the being and omnipotence of God, must be convinced that he has power to interfere in the works which he has *made*, and to alter or suspend those laws by which he usually conducts them. Yet, even when this is admitted, an idea seems to prevail, that the world has been so constructed, and its



regulations so permanently impressed, that after being once set in order, all proceeds of itself like the motion of a machine, in the absence, and without the interference, of him who constructed it. This, indeed, is the perfection of any thing made by man, who, owing to his limited nature, can only be in one place, and employed in one way, at the same time. But such an idea is totally inapplicable to the Supreme Being.

The Scriptures, according to every sound conclusion of reason, represent God to be infinite. Vast as we must believe the universe to be, it must have its bounds, but we must go beyond them to conceive of God. "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him."—"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? As high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." We cannot conceive of God but as every where present, and upholding all things by the word of his power. This can occasion to him no weariness, no distraction, no waste. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."—"Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God the Lord, the Creator



of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" The whole history in Scripture represents God as working on the right hand and on the left, though men do not discern him, and as constantly maintaining and directing all things. Without him, "not a sparrow falls to the ground."—"My Father," says Jesus, "worketh hitherto, and I work." These descriptions accord with every rational idea we can form of God, and are far more consistent than the notion that certain laws were at first impressed on matter, which, under the name of the course of nature, continue to operate, without the interference of the Creator. "For what is the course of nature but the agency of God? It has been justly denied, that the course of nature is a proper active cause, which will work and go on by itself without God, if he lets and permits it. The course of nature, separate from the agency of God, is no cause, or nothing. It is impossible it should continue of itself, or go on to operate by itself, any more than produce itself. God, the original cause of all being, is the only cause of all natural effects." In the words of Sir Isaac Newton, "It is the will of the mind that is the *first cause*, that gives subsistence and efficacy to all these *laws*; who is the *efficient cause* that pro-



duces the *phenomena* which appear in analogy, harmony, and agreement, according to these laws."

"The reason," says Warburton, "why men so readily admit the natural government of God, while they deny his moral government, is, that the former is thought to be kept in order only by the general laws of mechanism impressed on matter at its creation ; so that here he works neither immediately nor particularly, but leaves every thing to the government of these general laws. This supposed distance and separation of the great Artist from his work, after having once set the machine agoing by the first impression of his general laws, is the gratuitous conclusion of a talking philosophy. The latter and more correct inquiries into the material system, on the unerring experience of the Newtonian physics, have clearly discovered, that God is intimately present to every particle of matter, at every point of space, and in every instance of being. For a *vis inertiae*, or resistance to the change of its present state, being an essential quality of matter, and inconsistent with any motive, force, or power in that substance, all those effects commonly ascribed to a certain essence residing in it, such as gravity, attraction, elastic-



ty, repulsion, or whatever other tendencies to motion are observed in matter, are not powers naturally belonging to it, or what can possibly be made inherent in it : so that these qualities, without which matter would be utterly unfit for use, must needs be produced by the immediate influence of the First Cause, incessantly performing, by his Almighty finger, the minutest office in the material economy, working still near us, round us, within us, and in every part of us."

It is only Atheism in one form or other, which, inducing men to deny that God has power to interfere in the direction of his own works, can lead to the conclusion, that a miracle is impossible. Indeed, on any ground to assert the impossibility of a miracle is absurd ; for no man can prove, nor is there any reason to believe, that to work a miracle is a greater exertion of power than those usual operations which we daily witness. No man can shew, that to restore life to a dead body, and to bring it forth from the grave, is attended with more difficulty than to communicate life to a foetus, and to bring it forth from the womb. Both are equally beyond the power of man ; both are equally possible with God.

If the *possibility* of miracles cannot be denied,



the only other ground on which the assertion that they cannot be proved by human testimony, must be this, that in their nature they are *incredible*. But this can never be established. It is readily admitted, that the manner in which God acts in upholding the universe is the best possible, and that its uniformity and regularity are the result of infinite wisdom. This uniformity and regularity are likewise necessary, in order that, by comparing the future with the past, we may know what to reckon on, and how we ought to conduct ourselves; and were there no such regularity, there could be no miracle. But if all this arrangement is ordered, as we must believe, for the improvement and happiness of the moral world, then, so far from being *incredible*, it is in the highest degree *probable*, that when any important end is to be attained in the latter, the laws of the natural world, either in their uniform course, or temporary alteration, should be made subservient to it.

It is at the same time evident, that if what are called the laws of nature be under the management of a Legislator, not only may that Legislator modify these laws, but those modifications may be palpable facts, and so become the direct subject of testimony, and of such testimony, that if it could be proved to be false, it would



be a more palpable violation of moral order, than miracles can in any view be shewn to be of natural order. Imposture, as one has observed, in a number of men, whose aim is evidently virtuous, who persevere with constancy in their testimony, by which they expose themselves to the greatest calamities, and even to death, would undoubtedly be a violation of moral order, and such an exception to its general course as cannot be produced in the history of the world. "Human testimony is sufficient for all the purposes of transmitting from generation to generation well authenticated facts, of whatever kind they may be. Testimony is no proof of opinions, but it is allowed to be a proof of facts; and nothing can destroy the proof of testimony in any case, but a proof or probability that persons are not competent judges of the facts to which they give testimony, or that they are actually under some indirect influence in giving it in such particular case."

There is no conceivable way in which a divine revelation could be made, unless accompanied by miracles. There is, therefore, the same *probability* of the occurrence of miracles, as there is of a revelation from God, and the same necessity for the one as for the other. After that fami-



liar intercourse with God, which was enjoyed by man at his creation, was broken off, it must be by supernatural means when it is resumed. If God afterwards speaks audibly and visibly to men, it can only be in a way out of the common course. If he sends messengers to deliver his will, they must possess credentials to prove that they came from him. If a particular people are made, in the first instance, the depositories of his written word, and the medium of communication to the rest of the world, and are for this purpose subjected to a certain constitution of civil laws and religious services, and if all this be conducted in a way to commend itself to the reason of men properly exercised, that people must be made sensible, by manifest tokens, that in what they thus adopt, in itself so singular and unprecedented, they are not the dupes of artifice and fraud. On the other hand, it cannot be expected that these sensible tokens, or marks of divine interposition, are to be renewed in every age of the world, and to every individual in it. This would be to subvert the common order established, without answering an adequate end, since, like any other fact, they may be the subject of testimony.

If, however, men, through prejudice or inat-



tention, and from having their minds otherwise occupied, or opposed to the nature of such facts, will not receive them, when transmitted in this way, they would not be convinced of that truth which these miracles infer, although they themselves had been present when they were wrought. The carcasses of that generation which witnessed the thunders of Sinai, and entreated that they might not hear God speak any more lest they should die, fell in the wilderness on account of their unbelief. Some of those Jews who were present at the resurrection of Lazarus, went and told the enemies of Jesus Christ what had happened, apparently to obtain favour with them. The Jewish rulers, who witnessed the miracles of Jesus, and never denied them, put him to death. The Roman soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, and saw what happened there, accepted a bribe to circulate a false report. An attentive observation of human nature, of the motives which actuate the world, and of the general objects of men's ambition and pursuits, will oblige us fully to admit the truth of that weighty declaration, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

The miracles related in the Scriptures, are entirely different from the absurd and insulated pre



tences to any thing of the kind, either among heathens or others. Who could examine the accounts of the works ascribed to Apollonius Tyanæus ; of the Emperor Vespasian's having opened the eyes of a blind man at Alexandria ; of the wonders said to be performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, which ceased when, in consequence of an order from the king, the sepulchre was inclosed with a wall ; or of the French prophets in England, without rejecting them at once ? When they have been brought forward, as by Mr Hume in his Essay, to confront the evidence of the miracles of Scripture, their absurdity, their equivocal nature, their total want of adequate evidence and of adequate object, has been again and again exposed. It is not, indeed, to be conceived, that the man who rejects the miracles of Scripture, believes in the truth of those which he opposes to them. His object is to bring suspicion on every thing of a similar kind, by artfully confounding the nature and evidence of what is palpably false, with what he wishes to show is not true. By this confusion which he creates, the bulk of readers, through indolence, are deterred from further examination, and are led to give up the whole. But if ever the miracles of revelation shall be set aside as incredible, it must be by



some other means than by endeavouring to exalt to an equality with them counterfeits, whose base ingredients it requires but a small portion of attention and honesty to detect.

The sum of Mr Hume's Essay on Miracles, Dr Campbell has shewn to be this, "that it is impossible for God Almighty to give a revelation attended with such evidence, that it can be reasonably believed in after ages, or even in the same age, by any person who hath not been an eye-witness of the miracles by which it is supported." "Now, by what wonderful process of reasoning," he adds, "is this strange conclusion made out?" He then proceeds to examine the reasoning in the Essay, which he has confuted in the most triumphant manner, and has not only convicted Mr Hume of *begging the question*, taking for granted the very point in dispute, but has shewn that his favourite argument, of which he boasts the discovery, is founded in *error*, managed with *sophistry*, and at last *abandoned* by himself.

Mr Hume, after having asserted that no testimony for *any kind* of miracle has ever amounted to a probability, much less to a proof, and again, that "we may establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as



to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation for any such system of religion," adds in a note, "I beg the limitation here made may be remarked, when I say, that a miracle can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion. For I own that otherwise there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony." According, then, to Mr Hume himself, miracles may "*admit of proof from human testimony*," provided they be not brought in support of a system of religion. His exception, with respect to those miracles, which are made the foundation of religion, is evidently untenable. For whatever destroys the possibility of proving a miracle in the case of religion, must equally do so in every other case; and whatever shews that miracles in any other case admit of proof from human testimony, equally proves this in the case of religion.

Absurd, however, as Mr Hume's general position is, and untenable as the arbitrary limitation to which he resorts proves it to be, it is not surprising that such efforts have been made on the subject of miracles by those who oppose the truth of the Christian religion; since the miracles to which it appeals are so conclusive in its fa-



vour, and since “*the religion of the Bible is, of all the religions that have subsisted, or that now subsist in the world, the only religion which claims to have been attended in its first publication with the evidence of miracles.*” For though in different ages and countries numberless enthusiasts have arisen, extremely few have dared to advance this plea; and whenever any have had the boldness to recur to it, it hath proved the bane, and not the support, of their cause.” Mr Hume asserts, in his Essay, that men in all ages have been much imposed on by ridiculous stories of miracles ascribed to new systems of religion. To this Dr Campbell replies, “*that there is not the shadow of truth*” in this assertion, and that he is utterly at a loss to conceive what should have induced Mr Hume to advance it. In short, there is no presumption arising from the history of the world, which can in the least invalidate the argument from miracles in proof of the truth of Christianity. All miracles, except those wrought in support of the religion of Jesus Christ, have been engines of received superstitions and artifices, to keep alive the credulity of the people.

In Mr Hume’s Essay, we see the greatest opponent of the credibility of miracles compelled at last, by the conviction that came home to his



own mind, to abandon his general position, and to surrender at once the whole value of that argument which he boasts he had discovered, to prove that no testimony can amount to a proof of any kind of miracle, and to limit the whole force of his reasoning to the case of religion. For this limitation, it was out of his power to shew any proper ground. When, on the contrary, the nature of religion, and its importance to man, is considered, there is no unprejudiced person but must be convinced, that the case excepted is, *of all cases that can be conceived*, the most probable, and most rational ground for the display of miracles. Is there any thing in the world so important as religion, which teaches the knowledge of God ; in what manner men shall be freed from guilt, accepted by his Creator, and enabled to render to him acceptable service ; and on what grounds his happiness, after this short and transitory life, shall be secured through eternity ? This is religion ; and can any occasion be conceived so important, and so worthy of the display of the Creator's power and interposition, in deviating from those rules by which he commonly proceeds in the government of the world, in order to lay a just foundation for a system of religion.



After all, there *must* be miracles. Not only must we admit that they are both *possible* and *credible*, but the *absolute necessity* of their existence forces itself upon us. "Whether," says Dr Campbell, "the world *had*, or *had not a beginning*; whether, on the *first* supposition, the production of things be ascribed to *chance* or to *design*; whether, on the *second*, in order to solve the numberless objections that arise, we *do*, or *do not* recur to universal catastrophies, there is no possibility of accounting for the phenomena that presently come under our notice, without having at last recourse to miracles, that is, to events altogether unconformable, or, if you will, contrary to the present course of nature, known to us by experience."

The miracles which "lay a just foundation" for the Christian religion, were matters of fact, which could not be mistaken. They were not of a momentary nature, of which the proof is immediately withdrawn; but were permanent in their effects. They were also numerous, and were performed in broad day light, in the midst of multitudes. Above all, they were wrought before enemies, under a government and priesthood in the greatest degree hostile to them, and to the system they supported. Had, therefore, any de-



ception been practised, it must have been detected. But, on the contrary, the enemies of Christ, compelled to admit their reality, ascribed them, the Jews to diabolical, and the Heathens to magical influence. And they were never denied in the age in which they were performed, nor for ages afterwards. So that we have the *unanimous* testimony of friends, and of enemies, for their truth; of persons on both sides, whose interests were deeply implicated.

The miracles of Jesus Christ were worthy of him who wrought them, and of that cause which he came to support. Predicted before-hand, they were directed to beneficent purposes, and never performed as mere displays of power. They are in strict correspondence with the nature of the end designed, and are essentially necessary to account for the effects they produced. They are related to us by eye-witnesses, are inseparably connected with the rest of the history of which they are a part; and are every way suitable to our notions of the wisdom and goodness of God.



## CHAP. IV.

*The Genuineness and Authenticity of the  
Holy Scriptures. \**

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**Old Testament.**

**T**HE Bible, which contains the account of the origin, progress, and nature of the Christian religion, is the production, not of one period, but of many ages. The writers of it succeeded each other, during the space of above 1500 years. The Scriptures of the Old Testament far exceed, in antiquity, all other historical records. Moses, who wrote the first five books of which they are composed, lived more than 1000 years before Herodotus, the father of the Grecian history ; and rather earlier than the time of Herodotus, Ezra

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\* A genuine book is one written by the person whose name it bears, as the author of it. An authentic book is one that relates matters of fact, as they really happened.



and Nehemiah completed the historical part of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The longevity of the first generations of men, which accelerated the population of the world from a single pair, rendered a written revelation, between the fall of man, and the giving of the law at Sinai, less necessary, as the tradition of what was communicated by God was transmitted, in that period, through very few hands. From Adam to Moses, although a space of about 2500 years, it had only to pass through four intermediate persons. Thus the days of Moses were sufficiently early permanently to record the will of God; nor do the divine dispensations appear to have been brought to such maturity at an earlier period, as was requisite to preserve and to transmit that authentic revelation, which it then became proper to deliver. But, at that period, God separated a people from the nations, and gave them such an establishment, that full security was afforded for preserving entire his written word.

Moses who, at the giving of the law, acted the part of a mediator between God and the people of Israel, was called up to Mount Sinai, where he received those laws and institutions that were then enjoined. These, together with a



history of the creation, and of whatever, from the beginning, was necessary for the instruction of the people of God, were committed by him to writing, in five books, and deposited in the tabernacle by the side of the ark.

These five books, called the Book of the Law, and also known by the name of the Pentateuch, (or five volumes,) were the first part of the sacred records, and include the history of about 2550 years. The law was read every Sabbath day in the synagogues, and again solemnly every seventh year. The king was obliged to copy it, and the people were commanded to teach it to their children, and to bear it as "signs on their hands, and frontlets between their eyes." The rest of the books \* of the Old Testament, composed by different writers, carry the history of Israel beyond the Babylonish captivity, and contain the messages of a succession of prophets till about 420 years before the coming of Christ, when, at the distance of about 1030 years from Moses, Malachi, the last of the prophets, wrote.

The books which compose the Old Testament Scriptures were held by the Jews, in every age,

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\* The exact time when the book of Job was written is not known.



to be the genuine works of those persons to whom they are ascribed ; and they have also been universally and exclusively, without any addition or exception, considered by them as written under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. They were preserved by them with the greatest veneration ; and, at the same time, they carefully guarded against receiving along with them any apocryphal or uninspired books. While the Jews were divided into various sects, which stood in the most direct opposition to one another, there was never any difference among them respecting the authority of the sacred writings.

The five books of Moses were also preserved by the Samaritans, who received them nearly 700 years before the coming of Christ.\* Whatever disagreement, in other respects, subsisted between them and the Jews, and however violent their enmity against each other, they perfectly united in admitting the authenticity and inspiration of the law of Moses, which they both adopted as their religious rule. In addition to all this, about 280 years before the

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\* The temple of the Samaritans was built, in opposition to that at Jerusalem, about 409 years before Christ.



coming of Christ, the whole of the Old Testament was translated into Greek; a language which, from the time of Alexander's conquest, was commonly understood by the nations of the world. *Thus Jews, Samaritans, and all the civilized world, became the depositories of these sacred books, which prevented the possibility of their being either corrupted or altered.*

We are assured by Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was born about five years after the death of Jesus Christ, that although there were innumerable books among the Jews, they acknowledged none as divine but twenty-two books.\* He says, "That, during so many ages,

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\* Jewish mode of computation of the twenty-two books, viz.

|                                              |       |                                     |       |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Books of Moses . . . . .                     | 5     | Job . . . . .                       | 1     |
| The Book of Joshua . . . .                   | 1     | Psalms . . . . .                    | 1     |
| The Book of Judges, including Ruth . . . . . | 1     | Proverbs . . . . .                  | 1     |
| First and Second Samuel . .                  | 1     | Ecclesiastes . . . . .              | 1     |
| First and Second Kings . . .                 | 1     | Song of Solomon . . . . .           | 1     |
| First and Second Chronicles . . . . .        | 1     | Isaiah . . . . .                    | 1     |
| Ezra and Nehemiah . . . . .                  | 1     | Jeremiah and Lamentations . . . . . | 1     |
| Esther . . . . .                             | 1     | Ezekiel . . . . .                   | 1     |
|                                              |       | Daniel . . . . .                    | 1     |
|                                              |       | The twelve minor Prophets . . . . . | 1     |
|                                              | <hr/> |                                     | <hr/> |
|                                              | 12    |                                     | 22    |



no one has dared either to add any thing to the twenty-two books, or to take any thing from them, or to alter any thing in them; for it is implanted in the nature of all Jews, immediately from their birth, to consider these books as the oracles of God; to adhere to them, and, if occasion should require, cheerfully to die for their sake." He has given a list of these books as they stood in his time, and as they had been transmitted for ages. These are precisely the same which, from the beginning, have been received by all Christians, and which are still acknowledged by the modern Jews.

From the important connection that subsists between the Old and New Testaments, the early Christian writers carefully examined the authenticity of the Jewish Scriptures. In the second century, Melito, Bishop at Sardis, travelled to the East on purpose to investigate the subject. The learned Origen, in the third century, gives a list of the twenty-two books. Athanasius, in the fourth century, specifies the twenty-two canonical books, which, he says, "are received by the whole church." Gregory Nazianzen, in the fourth, and Jerome in the fifth century, affirm, that the twenty-two books alone were re-



ceived as canonical. This fact is also confirmed by the Council of Laodicea, in the year 363.\*

Nothing can be more satisfactory than this progress of evidence to the authenticity of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, to which it is of importance to add, that *there is no contradictory testimony*. On the other hand, they are corroborated by many collateral evidences of customs, traditions, and natural appearances, which have been collected from every part of the world.

They are likewise supported by all the notices to be found respecting them in the most ancient Heathen historians. Josephus appeals to the public records of different nations, and to a great number of books extant in his time, but now lost, as indisputable evidence, in the opinion of the Heathen world, for the truth of the most remarkable events related in his History, the early periods of which he professes to have taken principally from the Pentateuch.

Porphyry, one of the most acute and learned

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\* The full proof to every *Christian*, that the Jews have faithfully handed down the inspired writings neither more nor fewer than they received, is, that Jesus Christ, when referring to them, always spoke of them as that revelation which God had given.



of the early enemies of Christianity, admitted the genuineness of the Pentateuch, and acknowledged that Moses was prior to the Phœnician Sanchoniathon, who lived before the Trojan war. He even contended for the truth of Sanchoniathon's account of the Jews, from its coincidence with the Mosaic history. Nor was the genuineness of the Pentateuch denied, by any of the numerous writers against the Gospel, in the first four centuries, although the Christian fathers constantly appealed to the history and prophecies of the Old Testament in support of the divine origin of the doctrines which they taught. The power of historical truth compelled the Emperor Julian, whose favour to the Jews appears to have proceeded only from his hostility to the Christians, to acknowledge, that persons instructed by the Spirit of God once lived among the Israelites; and to confess that the books which bare the name of Moses, were genuine; and that the facts which they contained were worthy of credit.

For the genuineness and authenticity of their Scriptures, the Jews had the strongest evidence, and the impression it made on them corresponded to its strength. The five books of Moses are addressed to the Israelites as his contemporaries,



and they never afterwards could have been imposed as a genuine work on his countrymen, whose religion and government was built upon them. Those who were contemporaries with the respective writers of the rest of the books, who narrate the transactions of their own times, were witnesses of the truth of their histories. And, from the miracles which they constantly saw, and the fulfilment of the prophecies, which was all along taking place, they had complete proof that their prophets wrote by the authority of God himself.

These books are handed down to us by that nation, whose history they record with the most evident impartiality; in which its ingratitude, and often its baseness, is exposed; its sinful incredulity on many occasions is declared; its virtues are not magnified, and its courage is not extolled. This history contains an account, not in confused traditions, but in minute detail of time, place, and circumstances—of great public facts transacted in the presence of the whole people, in which they were actors, and of which permanent memorials were instituted at the time when they occurred. These facts involved their submission to a religion entirely different from that of all the surrounding nations, which laid them under great



and painful restraints ; and to a code of laws and institutions engrossed in their history, which, while it secluded them from the rest of mankind, exposed them to their utmost detestation and contempt. And it is a striking singularity belonging to these laws, that they were drawn out at once, and were permanently binding both on the rulers and people, never to be diminished, or added to, or in any respect altered. Such facts, then, had they never existed, could not at any period have been forced upon the belief of a whole nation, so as to be ever afterwards acknowledged by them, *without one dissenting voice.*

Nor are the Jews alone referred to as *witnesses* of some of the most important of these facts, the scene of which is not laid in an obscure corner, but in the midst of the civilized nations then existing in the world. The entrance of their ancestors into Egypt ; their continuance for centuries, and increase there ; the manner in which they were treated ; the causes of their being allowed to depart, and the awful catastrophe which accompanied that departure ; are facts in which the whole people of Egypt were equally implicated with themselves. Their subsequent continuance during forty years in an uncultivated desert ; their invasion of Palestine ;



the long continued contest, and their final occupation of that land, were public and permanent facts, brought home to the inhabitants of that country, who lived in the very centre of the peopled part of the world. The train of the history too, which, as well as the style and tendency of all the separate books, is entirely consistent with itself, proceeds in so uniform a manner, and one thing so naturally rises out of another, that unless on the supposition of what is past, that which follows cannot be accounted for. This remark holds good with respect to the state of the Jews even to this day ; and all that has gone before is necessary to explain their present unexampled situation. Impressed with an unalterable conviction of their divine origin, they have, at the expence of every thing dear to men, tenaciously adhered, as far as circumstances permit, to the outward form of the religion, laws, and institutions engrossed in their sacred records. And although they themselves are condemned by these books, and know that they support a system which they mortally hate, they still continue to be the faithful depositories of the Old Testament Scriptures.

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Mr LESLIE, who writes on Deism, in proving the authenticity of the books of Moses, lays



down the following rules as a test of truth, which all meet in these books. Wherever they do meet, what they refer to cannot be false. On the contrary, they cannot possibly meet in any imposture whatever.

“The first is, That the matter of fact be such, that men’s outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it.

“2. That it be done publicly in the face of the world.

“3. That not only public monuments be kept in memory of it, but some outward actions be performed.

“4. That such monuments, and such actions or observances, be instituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.”

“The two first rules,” he observes, “make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed on men at the time when said to be done, because every man’s eyes and senses would contradict it. The two last rules render it impossible that the matter of fact should be invented and imposed some time after. For whenever it came to be invented, if not only monuments were said to remain of it, but likewise that public actions and observances were constantly used ever since, the deception must be detected by



no such monuments appearing, and by the experience of every one, who must know that no such actions or observances were ever used by them.

“The books of Moses,” he adds, “also speak of themselves as the standing law of the nation of the Jews, binding the rulers as well as the people. Now, in whatever age it can be supposed that these books were forged, it is impossible they could be received as truth; for, when first invented, every one must know that he had never heard of them before. No man could at this day invent a book of statutes and acts of parliament for England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of statutes they had ever known. Equally impossible would it have been at any time to have persuaded the Jews that they had acknowledged these books all along from the days of Moses, till the time in which they were invented. In this case, they must at once have forgot their former laws and government if they could receive these books as being their former laws, which they declared themselves to be.

But these books not only contain the laws of Israel, but give an historical account of their institution, and the practice of them from that time. For instance, of the passover in memory



of the death of the first born in Egypt, and that the same day all the first born of Israel, both of man and beast, were by a perpetual law dedicated to God. Besides the remembrance of particular actions, there were also other solemn institutions in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt; as of the Sabbath, their daily sacrifices and yearly expiations, their new moons, and several feasts and fasts. So that there were yearly, monthly, weekly, daily, remembrances and recognitions of these things."

After proving, in a variety of ways, that all his four rules meet in the books of Moses, Mr Leslie says, "You may challenge the whole world to shew any action that is fabulous, which has all the four rules or marks before-mentioned. *It is impossible.*—I do not say that every thing which wants these four marks is false, but that *nothing can be false which has them all.*"

"Mahomet pretended to no miracles; but those which are told of him all want the two first rules. For his pretended converse with the moon, and his night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven, were not performed before any body. The same is to be said of the fables of the heathen gods, of Mercury's stealing sheep, Jupiter's turning himself into a



bull, and the like. It is true the heathen deities had their priests; they had likewise feasts, games, and other institutions in memory of them. But all these want the fourth mark, viz. that such priesthood and institutions should commence from the time when such things as they commemorate were said to be done, so that they cannot secure after ages from imposture, by detecting it at the time when first invented."

It is said that Dr Middleton endeavoured for twenty years to find out some pretended fact to which Mr Leslie's four rules could be applied, but without success.

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### New Testament.

FROM the time when the Old Testament was completed by Malachi, the last of the prophets, till the publication of the New Testament, about 450 years elapsed. During the life of Jesus Christ, and for some time after his ascension, nothing on the subject of his mission was committed to writing. The period of his remaining on earth, may be regarded as an intermediate state between the Old and New dispensations.



His personal ministry was confined to the land of Judea ; and, by means of his miracles and preaching, together with those of his disciples, the attention of men, in that country, was sufficiently directed to his doctrine. They were also in possession of the Old Testament Scriptures, which, at that season, it was of the greatest importance they should consult, in order to compare the ancient predictions with what was then taking place. Immediately after the resurrection of Jesus, his disciples, in the most public manner, and in the place where he had been crucified, proclaimed that event, and the whole of the doctrine which he had commanded them to teach. In this they continued personally to labour for a considerable time, first among their countrymen the Jews, and then among the other nations, to whom, at length, they understood the commission they had received to extend.

After their doctrine had every where attracted attention, and, in spite of the most violent opposition, had made its way through the civilized world ; and when churches or societies of Christians were collected, not only in Judea, but in the most celebrated cities of Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, the Scriptures of the New Testament were composed by the apostles, and other



inspired men, and entrusted to the keeping of these churches.

The whole of the New Testament was not written at once, but in different parts, and on various occasions. Six of the apostles, and two inspired disciples who accompanied them in their journies, were employed in this work. The histories which it contains of the life of Christ, known by the name of the Gospels, were composed by four of his contemporaries, two of whom had been constant attendants on his public ministry. The first of these was published within a few years \* after his death, in that very country where he had lived, and among the people who had seen him, and observed his conduct. The history called the "Acts of the Apostles," which contains an account of their proceedings, and of the progress of the Gospel, from Jerusalem, among the Gentile nations, was published about the year 64, being about 30 years after our Lord's crucifixion, by one who, although not an apostle, declares that he had "perfect understanding of all things, from the very first," and who had

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\* "Some have thought that it was written no more than eight years after our Lord's ascension; others have reckoned it no fewer than fifteen." Campbell's *Preface to Matthew's Gospel*.



written one of the Gospels. This book, commencing with a detail of proceedings, from the resurrection of Christ, carries down the evangelical history till the arrival of Paul as a prisoner at Rome. The Epistles, addressed to churches in particular places, to believers scattered up and down in different countries, or to individuals, in all twenty-one in number, were separately written, by five of the apostles, from seventeen to twenty, thirty, and thirty-five years after the death of Christ. Four of these writers had accompanied the Lord Jesus during his life, and one of them declares had been "eye-witnesses of his majesty." The fifth was the Apostle Paul, who, as he expresses it, was "one born out of due time," but who had, likewise, seen Jesus Christ, and been empowered by him to work miracles, which were "the signs of an apostle." One of these five also wrote the book of Revelation, about the year 96, addressed to seven churches in Asia, containing epistles to these churches from Jesus Christ himself, with various instructions for the immediate use of all Christians, together with a prophetic view of the kingdom of God till the end of time. These different pieces, which compose the Scriptures of the New Testament, were received by



the churches with the highest veneration ; and as the same instructions, although partially addressed, were equally applicable and necessary to all, they were immediately handed about from one church to another, till each was in possession of the whole. The volume of the New Testament was thus completed before the death of the last of the apostles, most of whom had sealed their testimony with their blood.

From the manner in which these Scriptures were at first circulated, some of their parts would be longer of reaching certain places than others. These, of course, would not be so soon received into the canon\* as the rest. Owing to this circumstance, as it would appear, and to a few of the books being addressed to individual believers, or to their not having the name of their writers affixed, or the designation of the Apostle added, there was, for a time, a doubt among some respecting the genuineness of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the 2d Epistle of Peter, the 2d and 3d Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Book of Revelation. These, however, though not universally, were ge-

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\* Canon is a rule or law. Hence the books of the Holy Scriptures taken together are called the Canon.



herally acknowledged ; while all the other books of the New Testament were without dispute received from the beginning. This discrimination proves the scrupulous care of the first churches on this highly important subject.

At length those books which had not at first been admitted were, like the rest, universally received, not by the votes of a council, as is sometimes said, but after deliberate and free enquiry by many separate societies, in different parts of the world. These refer to the same facts with all the other books, inculcate the same doctrine, and are written in the same spirit; so that, had they never been acknowledged by Christians, the evidence to the truth of Christianity arising from the rest, would still have been complete. It is at the same time a certain fact, that no other books besides those which at present compose the volume of the New Testament, were admitted by the churches. Other histories, as might have been expected, were written of the life of Christ, and one forgery was attempted, of a letter said to be written by Jesus himself to Abgarus, King of Edessa ; but of the first, none were received as of any authority, and the last was universally rejected. “ Besides our Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles,” says Paley, “ no Christian history



claiming to be written by an Apostle or apostolical man, is quoted within 300 years after the birth of Christ, by any writer now extant or known, or if quoted, is quoted with marks of censure and rejection."

This agreement of Christians respecting the Scriptures, when we consider their many differences in other things, is the more remarkable, that it took place without any public authority being interposed. "We have no knowledge," says the above author, "of any interference of authority in the question before the council of Laodicea, in the year 363. Probably the decree of this council rather declared than regulated the public judgment, or, more properly speaking, the judgment of some neighbouring churches; the council itself consisting of no more than thirty or forty Bishops of Lydia and the adjoining countries. Nor does its authority seem to have extended farther." But the fact that no public authority was interposed, does not require the above reasoning to support it. The churches at the beginning being independent of each other, and widely separated, all necessarily judged for themselves in this matter.

In thus delivering this part of his written revelation, God proceeded in the same way as he



had done in the publication of the Old Testament Scriptures. For a considerable time, his will, was declared to mankind through the medium of oral tradition. At length he saw meet, in his wisdom, to give it a more permanent form. But this was not done, till a nation, separated from all others, was provided for its reception. In the same manner, when the Lord Jesus set up his kingdom in the world, of which the nation of Israel of old was a type, he first made known his will by means of verbal communication, through his servants whom he commissioned and sent out for this purpose; and when, through their means, he had prepared his subjects, and collected them into churches, to be the depositories of his word, he caused it to be delivered to them in writing. His kingdom was not to consist of any particular nation, like that of Israel, but of all those individuals in every part of the world who should believe in his name. It was to be ruled, not by means of human authority or compulsion of any kind, but solely by his authority. Thus these sacred writings were entrusted to a nation prepared for their reception. A nation among the nations, but singularly distinct from all the rest, who guarded and preserved them with the same inviolable attach-



ment as the Old Testament Scriptures had experienced from the Jews.

Respecting the time when the Scriptures of the New Testament were written, no objection can be offered, provided, as was actually the case, they were made public before that generation, which had witnessed the transactions they record, had passed. The dates of these writings fall within the period of the lives of many who were in full manhood when the Lord Jesus was upon earth ; and the facts detailed in the histories, and referred to in the Epistles, being of the most public nature, were still open to full investigation. It must also be recollected, that the Apostles and Disciples, during the whole intermediate period, were publicly proclaiming to the world the same things which were afterwards engrossed in their writings.

Had these Scriptures been published before Societies of Christians were in existence, to whose care could they have been intrusted ? What security would there have been for their preservation, or that they would not have been corrupted ? In the way which was adopted, they were committed to faithful men, who viewing them as the charter of their own salvation, and the only means of rescuing their fellow creatures from mi-



sery and guilt, watched over their preservation with the most assiduous care.

But unless the whole manner of communicating the revelation of God, in these Scriptures, had been altered, it is not possible that, excepting the histories of the life of Christ, they could have been earlier committed to writing. The history of the Acts of the Apostles, being carried down to about the year 63 of the Christian æra, could not, it is evident, have been published sooner. The Epistles are not addressed to men of the world, or of any particular countries, but exclusively to believers. The truth conveyed in them is not delivered in an abstract form ; but in the way of particular application to existing cases and circumstances. This practical manner of communicating the doctrine, and of engrossing the laws of the kingdom of Christ, which commends itself to the judgment of every reflecting mind, could not, it is manifest, have been adopted till Societies of Christians were in existence, and till they had existed some considerable time. In this way, too, we have an undeniable proof of the success of the Apostles in the rapid progress of the Gospel. We are made acquainted, as we could not otherwise have been, with their zeal, resolution, self-denial, disinterestedness,



patience, and meekness, and have the most convincing evidence of the extraordinary gifts they possessed. We are also put in possession of indubitable evidence of the gifts conferred on the first Christians, as well as of their sincerity, courage, and patience.

Thus were the Scriptures delivered into the hands of the first churches. By the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, both of friends and foes, they were received by Christians of different sects, and were constantly appealed to, on all hands, in the controversies that arose among them. Commentaries were very early written upon them, and translations made into different languages. Formal catalogues of them were published, and they were attacked by the adversaries of Christianity, who not only did not call in question, but expressly admitted the facts they contained, and that they were the genuine productions of the persons whose names they bore.

In proof that the Scriptures were made public, and delivered to the churches in the age to which their dates refer, we have the attestation of a connected chain of Christian writers, from that period to the present day. No fewer than five of



these authors, part of whose works are still extant, were contemporaries of the Apostles.

BARNABAS was the companion of the Apostle Paul. He is the author of an Epistle, which was well known among the early Christians. It is still extant, and refers to the Apostolic writings.

CLEMENT was the third overseer of the church at Rome, and is mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians. He has left a long Epistle, which is still extant, though not entire, written in name of the church at Rome to the church at Corinth, in which the latter is admonished to adhere to the commands of Christ. Irenæus says that it was "written by Clement, who had seen the blessed Apostles, and had conversed with them; who had the preaching of the Apostles still sounding in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes. Nor he alone; for there were then still many alive who had been taught by the Apostles. In the time therefore of this Clement, when there was no small dissension among the brethren at Corinth, the church at Rome sent a most excellent letter to the Corinthians, persuading them to peace among themselves." About 80 or 90 years after this letter was written, Dionysius, the Bishop at Corinth, declares, that "it had been wont



to be read in that church from ancient times." It contains several quotations from the New Testament Scriptures, and allusions to them.

HERMAS also, contemporary with the Apostles, has left a book that still remains, called "The Shepherd of Hermas," in which he quotes and enforces the doctrine of Scripture.

IGNATIUS was overseer of the church at Antioch, about thirty-seven years after Christ's ascension. He suffered martyrdom at Rome under the Emperor Trajan. Ignatius has left several Epistles that are still extant, which give testimony to Jesus Christ and his doctrine. He declares, that he "fled to the Gospels as the flesh of Jesus, and to the Apostles as the elders of the church."

POLYCARP had been taught by the Apostles, and had conversed with many who had seen Christ. He was appointed by the Apostles, Bishop of the church at Smyrna. One epistle of his still remains, which evinces the respect that he and other Christians bore for the Scriptures. Irenæus, who, in his youth, had been a disciple of Polycarp, says concerning him, in a letter to Florinus,—“ I saw you when I was very young, in the Lower Asia, with Polycarp. For I better remember the affairs of that time, than those which have lately happened ; the things which



we learn in our childhood growing up with the soul, and uniting themselves to it: Insomuch, that I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and the tenor of his life and the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people, and how he related his conversation with John and others, who had seen the Lord; and how he related their sayings, and what he had heard concerning the Lord, both concerning his miracles and his doctrine, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life: all which Polycarp related agreeable to the Scriptures. These things I then, and through the mercy of God toward me, diligently heard and attended to, recording them not on paper, but upon my heart; and, through the grace of God, I continually renew the remembrance of them." Polycarp was condemned to the flames at Smyrna, the proconsul being present, and all the people in the amphitheatre demanding his death. Thus, like Ignatius, he confirmed his testimony to the Scriptures with his blood.

PAPIAS was a hearer of the Apostle John, and a companion of Polycarp. He was the author of five books which are now lost, but which, according to quotations from them that remain,



bore testimony to the Scriptures. He expressly ascribes their respective Gospels to Matthew and Mark.

The above six writers had all lived and conversed with some of the Apostles. Those parts which remain of the writings of the first five, who are called the Apostolical Fathers, are valuable by their antiquity ; and all of them contain some important testimony to the Scriptures.

About twenty years after these writers follows JUSTIN MARTYR. He was born about the year 89, and suffered martyrdom about the year 163. Originally he had been a heathen philosopher ; and, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, he relates the circumstances of his conversion to Christianity. From his works might be extracted almost a complete life of Christ ; and he uniformly represents the Scriptures as containing the authentic account of his doctrine. The Gospels, he says, were read and expounded every Sunday in the solemn assemblies of the Christians. He particularly mentions the Acts of the Apostles along with the books of the Old Testament, which were also regularly read as in the Jewish synagogues ; and he appeals to the Scriptures as writings open to all the world, and read by Jews and Gentiles. He presented two apologies



for the Christian religion; the first to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, in the year 140; the second to Marcus Antoninus, the philosopher, in the year 162. Both these apologies are still extant; the first entire, of the second the beginning is wanting.

DIONYSIUS, TATIAN, and HEGESIPPUS, wrote about thirty years after Justin Martyr, and give their testimony to the Scriptures. Hegesippus relates, that, travelling from Palestine to Rome, he visited in his journey many Bishops; and that "in every succession, and in every city, the same doctrine is taught which the law and the prophets and the Lord teacheth."

About the year 177, the churches at Lyons and Vienne in France sent a relation of the persecutions they suffered to the churches in Asia and Phrygia. POTHINUS, Bishop of the church at Lyons, was then 90 years old; and in his early life was contemporary with the Apostle John. This letter, which is preserved entire, makes exact references to the Scriptures. As it is extremely interesting, some extracts from it, and from the account of the death of Polycarp, shall be afterwards given.

IRENÆUS succeeded Pothinus as Bishop at Lyons. In his youth, as has been already noti-



ced, he had been a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. Thus he was only one step separated from the Apostles. Iræneus gives a most ample testimony, both to the genuineness and the authenticity of the Scriptures. "We have not received," says he, "the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those by whom the Gospel has been brought to us ; which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith. For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike, the gospel of God. Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a church there. And after their exit, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter. And Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a



book the Gospel preached by him (Paul.) Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, he likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia. And all these have declared to us that there is one God, the maker of the heavens and the earth, declared by the law and the prophets, and one Christ, the Son of God; and he who does not assent to them, despiseth indeed those who knew the mind of the Lord; but he despiseth also Christ himself the Lord, and he despiseth likewise the Father, and is self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation.”—“The tradition of the Apostles hath spread itself over the whole universe; and all they who search after the sources of truth, will find this tradition to be held sacred in every church. We might enumerate all those who have been appointed Bishops to those churches by the Apostles, and all their successors up to our days. It is by this uninterrupted succession that we have received the tradition which actually exists in the church, and also the doctrine of truth as it is preached by the Apostles.”

After giving some reasons why he supposed the number of the Gospels were precisely four, Irenæus says, “Whence it is manifest that the



Word, the former of all things, who sits upon the cherubim, and upholds all things, having appeared to men, has given us a Gospel of a fourfold character, but joined in one spirit. The Gospel according to John discloses his primary and glorious generation from the fathers: 'In the beginning was the Word.' But the Gospel according to Luke, being of a priestly character, begins with Zacharias the priest offering incense to God. Matthew relates his generation, which is according to men: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.' Mark begins from the prophetic spirit which came down from above to men, saying, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet."

The above passage distinctly ascertains, that the four Gospels, as we have them, and no more, were all equally received and acknowledged by the first churches.

Irenæus further says, "The Gospel according to Matthew was written to the Jews, for they earnestly desired a Messiah of the seed of David; and Matthew, having also the same desire to a yet greater degree, strove by all means to give them full satisfaction that Christ was of the seed of David, wherefore he began with his genealo-



gy.”—“ Wherefore also Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, makes this the beginning of his evangelic writing, ‘ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.’ And in the end of his Gospel, Mark says, ‘ So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.’ “ But if any one rejects Luke, as if he did not know the truth, he will be convicted of throwing away the Gospel, of which he professeth to be a disciple. For there are many, and these very necessary, parts of the Gospel, which we know by his means.” He then refers to several particulars, which are known only from Luke.

The Acts of the Apostles is a book much quoted by Irenæus, as written by Luke, the companion of the Apostles. There are few things recorded in that book which have not been mentioned by him. “ And that Luke,” says he, “ was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-worker in the Gospel, he himself shews, not boasting of it, indeed, but obliged to it for the sake of truth.”

Irenæus quotes largely from the Epistles of Paul, and remarks, that this Apostle “ frequently uses hyperbata, (or transpositions of words from



their natural order,) because of the rapidity of his words, and because of the mighty force of "the spirit in him." The book of Revelation Irenæus often quotes, and says, "It was seen no long time ago, but almost in our own age, at the end of the reign of Domitian." He mentions the code of the Old Testament and of the New, and calls the one, as well as the other, the Oracles of God.

Speaking of the Scriptures in general, he says, "well knowing that the Scriptures are perfect, as being dictated by the word of God and his spirit."—"A heavy punishment awaits those who add to or take from the Scriptures."—"But we, following the one and only true God as our teacher, and having his words as a rule of truth, do all always speak the same things concerning the same things."

ATHENAGORAS, MILTIADES, THEOPHILUS, and PANTÆNUS, who lived at the same time with Irenæus, all bear their testimony to the Scriptures. Some of their works remain, and others are lost.

CLEMENT of Alexandria followed Irenæus at the distance of sixteen years. He was a man of great learning, and presided in the Catechetical school at Alexandria. Clement travelled into



different countries in search of information. "The law and the Prophets, together with the Gospels," he says, "conduct to one and the same knowledge in the name of Christ."—"One God and Almighty Lord is taught by the law and the prophets, and the blessed gospels." He has given a distinct account of the order in which the four Gospels were written. The Gospels which contain the genealogies were, he says, written first, Mark's next, and John's the last. He repeatedly quotes the four Gospels by the names of their authors, and expressly ascribes the Acts of the Apostles to Luke. His quotations from the Scriptures of the New Testament are numerous, and he calls them "the Scriptures of the Lord," and the "true evangelical canon."

Next to Clement, and in the same age, comes TERTULLIAN, who was born at Carthage, about the year 160. He was a man of extensive learning, and the most considerable of all the Latin writers on Christianity. He wrote a very valuable apology for the Christians about the year 198, addressed to the governors of provinces, which is still extant. He gives the most ample attestation to the Scriptures, quoting them so frequently, that Dr Lardner observes, that there are more and longer quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Chris-



tian author, than there are of all the works of Cicero in writers of all characters for several ages." After enumerating many churches which had been gathered by Paul and the other Apostles, he "declares, that not those churches only which were called apostolical, but all who have fellowship with them in the same faith, received the four Gospels, and that these had been in the possession of the churches from the beginning. He also declares, that the original manuscripts of the Apostles, at least some of them, were preserved till the age in which he lived, and were then to be seen.

"In the first place," says Tertullian, "we lay this down for a certain truth, that the Evangelical Scriptures have for their authors the Apostles, to whom the work of publishing the Gospel was committed by the Lord himself; and also apostolical men. Among the Apostles, John and Matthew teach us the faith; among apostolical men, Luke and Mark refresh it, going upon the same principles as concerning the one God the Creator, and his Christ born of a virgin, the accomplishment of the law and the prophets.—If it be certain that is most genuine which is most ancient, that most ancient which is from the beginning, and that from the beginning which is from the Apostles; in like man-



er, it will be also certain that has been delivered from the Apostles which is held sacred in the churches of the Apostles. Let us then see what milk the Corinthians received from Paul, to what rule the Galatians were reduced, what the Philippians read, what the Thessalonians, the Ephesians, and also the Romans recite, who are near to us; with whom both Peter and Paul left the Gospel sealed with their blood. We have also churches which are the disciples of John; for, though Marcion rejects his Revelation, the succession of Bishops, traced up to the beginning, will shew it to have John for its author. We know also the original of other churches, (that is, that they are apostolical.) I say then that with them, but not with them only that are apostolical, but with all who have fellowship with them in the same faith, is that Gospel of Luke received, which we so zealously maintain." That is the genuine entire Gospel of Luke, not that which had been curtailed and altered by Marcion. "The same authority of the Apostolical churches will support the other Gospels, which we have from them, and according to them, (that is according to their copies.) I mean John's and Matthew's, although that likewise which Mark published may be said to be



Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was, for Luke's digest also is often ascribed to Paul." He says that Matthew's Gospel began in this manner, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The Acts of the Apostles are often quoted by Tertullian under that title:—he calls them Luke's Commentary, or History.

"I will," says Tertullian, "by no means say Gods nor Lords, but I will follow the Apostle; so that if the Father and the Son are to be mentioned together, I will say God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Lord; but when I mention Christ only, I can call him God, as the Apostle does." "*Of whom Christ came, who is,*" says he, "*overall, God blessed for ever.*"

To Tertullian succeeds a multitude of Christian writers. Of the works of these authors, only fragments and quotations remain, in which several testimonies to the Gospels are found. In one of them is an abstract of the whole Gospel history.

After those writers, and at the distance of 25 years from Tertullian, comes the celebrated ORIGEN of Alexandria, of whom it is said, that "he did not so much recommend Christianity by what he preached or by what he wrote, as by the general tenor of his life." He was



born about 150 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the quantity of his writings, he exceeded the most laborious of the Greek and Latin writers. He gives full and decisive testimony to the Scriptures. He says, "that the four Gospels alone are received without dispute by the whole church of God under heaven;" and he subjoins a history of their respective authors. "The first," says Origen, "is written by Matthew, once a Publican, afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ. The second is that according to Mark, who wrote it as Peter dictated to him, who therefore calls him his son in his Catholic Epistle. The third is that according to Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts. Lastly, that according to John. He speaks of the Acts of the Apostles as an uncontested book, and gives the same account concerning Mark's Gospel, as having been written under the direction of the Apostle Peter, as is given by Clement. It is reckoned a monument of the humility of Peter, that several very remarkable circumstances in his favour, which are related by the other Evangelists, are not mentioned or even hinted at by Mark.

Origen uniformly quotes the Epistle to the



Hebrews as the writing of the Apostle Paul, and the book of Revelation as the writing of the Apostle John. His quotations of Scripture are so numerous, that Dr Mill says, "if we had all his works remaining, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible." He expresses, in the most unqualified terms, his opinion of the authority of the books of the New Testament as inspired writings, and represents the sacred books as not writings of men, but as having been written and delivered to us from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the will of the Father of all, through Jesus Christ. He urges, with earnestness, the reading of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, as a sacred obligation in the churches of Christ. "Food," says he, "is eaten, physic is taken; though the good effects is not presently perceived, a benefit is expected in time, and may be obtained. So it is with the Holy Scriptures; though, at the very time of reading them, there be no sensible advantage, yet, in the end, they will be thought profitable for strengthening virtuous dispositions, and weakening the habits of vice.—The true food of the rational nature is the word of God.—Let us come daily to the wells of the Scriptures, the waters of the Holy Spirit, and there



draw and carry hence a full vessel. The greatest torment of demons is to see men reading the word of God, and labouring to understand the divine law."

In his Apology for the Christian Religion, in answer to Celsus the Epicurean philosopher, Origen, when giving a quotation from Scripture, says, that it is written, "not in any private book, or such as are read by a few persons only, but in books read by every body." In that Apology, he has preserved, from the writings of Celsus, most distinct and complete attestations to the Gospel history.

GREGORY, Bishop at Neocesaria, and DIONYSIUS of Alexandria, scholars of Origen, and the well-known CYPRIAN, Bishop at Carthage, come about twenty years after Origen. Their writings abound with copious citations from the Scriptures, to which they give their full and particular attestation. Cyprian says, "The church is watered, like Paradise, by four rivers, that is four Gospels."

Within forty years after Cyprian, VICTORIN, Bishop at Pettaw, in Germany, and a multitude of Christian writers, all testify their profound respect for the Scriptures.

About the year 306, ARNOBIUS and LACTAN-



TIUS wrote in support of the Christian religion. Lactantius argues in its defence, from the consistency, simplicity, disinterestedness, and sufferings of the writers of the Gospels. Arnobius vindicates the credit of the writers of the Gospels, observing, that they were eye-witnesses of the facts which they relate, and that their ignorance of the arts of composition, was rather a confirmation of their testimony, than an objection to it.

EUSEBIUS, Bishop of Cæsaria, born about the year 270, comes in his writings about 15 years after the above authors. He composed a History of Christianity, from its origin to his own time; and has handed down many valuable extracts of ancient authors, whose works have perished. In giving his testimony to the Scriptures, he shews himself to be much conversant in the works of Christian authors, and he appears to have collected every thing that had been said before his own time respecting the volume of the New Testament.

ATHANASIUS became Bishop at Alexandria about the year 326. He expressly affirms, that every one of the books of the New Testament that we now receive, are inspired scriptures, which he specifies in their order, and ascribes



them to the writers whose names they bear. He represents them as constantly and publicly read in the Christian churches. Athanasius had access to every source of information, and applied himself to ascertain the canon of the Old Testament as well as the New. It appears, that he sent to the Emperor Constance a copy of the whole Bible, which he described as the whole inspired Scriptures. Speaking of the Scriptures, he says, "These are fountains of salvation. In them alone, the doctrine of religion is taught. Let no man add to them, or take any thing from them."

It is unnecessary to carry down this chain of historical evidence any farther. The Council of Nice was called by Constantine in the year 325; and as Christianity was then become the established religion of the Roman empire, its history is afterwards inseparably interwoven with every thing connected with the state of the world.

From the above numerous and early writers, we have most unquestionable attestations to the authority of the New Testament Scriptures. First, we have six writers who were contemporary with the Apostles, and there were eleven more who lived in distant parts of the



world, regularly succeeding each other during the first hundred years after the Apostles. From that period, the chain of evidence continues unbroken and uninterrupted. "When Christian advocates," says Paley, "merely tell us that we have the same reason for believing the Gospels to be written by the Evangelists whose names they bear, as we have for believing the Commentaries to be Cæsar's, the Eneid Virgil's, or the Orations Cicero's, they content themselves with an imperfect representation. They state nothing more than what is true, but they do not state the truth correctly. In the number, variety, and early date of our testimonies, we far exceed all other ancient books. For one which the most celebrated work of the most celebrated Greek or Roman writer can allege, we produce many."

The force of the above testimony is greatly strengthened by the consideration, that it is the concurring evidence of separate, independent, and well-informed writers, who lived in countries remote from one another. Clement lived at Rome; Ignatius, at Antioch; Polycarp, at Smyrna; Justin Martyr, in Syria; Irenæus, in France; Clement, at Alexandria; Tertullian, at Carthage; Origen, in Egypt; Eusebius, at



Cæsarea; Victorin, in Germany. The dangers which they incurred, and the hardships and persecutions which they suffered, some of them even unto death, on account of their adherence to the Christian faith, give irresistible weight to their testimony.



## CHAP. V.

*The Inspiration of the Scriptures.*

**T**HE Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are not only genuine and authentic, but also inspired writings. The claim of inspiration which they advance, is a claim of infallibility and of perfection. It is also a claim of absolute authority, which demands unlimited submission. It is a claim which, if set up for any other book, may, with the utmost ease, be shewn to be unfounded.

The inspiration of the Scriptures is attested, both by the nature and value of their contents, and by the evidence of their truth. On these grounds, they stand without a rival in the world, and challenge from every man the highest possible regard.

Our knowledge of the inspiration of the Bible, like every other doctrine it contains, must be collected from itself. If the writers of this book



appear with such credentials as entitle them to be received as commissioned of God, then it is from themselves only we can learn those truths which they are authorised to make known. Among these, it is of primary importance to know what is the extent of that dependence which we are to place on their words. Is implicit credit to be given to every thing they declare? and if the writers are numerous, is this equally due to them all?

It has been contended, that different degrees of inspiration are to be attributed to different parts of the word of God. To some places belongs, as is supposed, an inspiration of *superintendence*; to others, of *elevation*; and to the rest, of *suggestion*.

To this view of the matter, though very generally adopted, the writers of the Scriptures give no countenance whatever. This being the case, and as the question of inspiration can only be determined by the Scriptures themselves, all the distinctions that have been introduced are mere theories, unfounded and unsupported by any evidence. The Scriptures uniformly assert the highest degree of inspiration, and give no intimation of any part of them being written under an inspiration of any kind but one. "All Scrip-



ture," says Paul, "is given by inspiration of God." This declaration of Paul refers to the whole of the Old Testament, which Timothy had known from his childhood. But as part of the New Testament was at that time written, and as the whole of it is uniformly classed by its writers with the Old Testament, this expression of Paul's equally applies to the New Testament. The Apostle Peter classes *all* the Epistles of Paul, which he ascribes to the wisdom given to him, with "the other Scriptures," thereby declaring them to be of the same authority with the rest, and shewing that all the writings, both of Old and New Testament, went by the name of "Scriptures."

Inspiration belongs to the original writings. No one contends for any degree of inspiration to the transcribers in different ages. Accuracy in the copies they have made is, under God, secured by the fidelity of the keepers of Scripture, by the opposition of parties watching each other, as of Jews and Christians, and of various sects, and by the great multiplication of copies and translations into different languages, which took place so early. The agreement among the ancient manuscripts, both of the old and New Tes-



taments, has been ascertained, by the strictest examination, to be astonishingly exact.

The inspiration spoken of in the book of Job, xxxii. 8, where it is said, "There is a spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding," appears to refer to the communication of those intellectual powers with which man is endowed by his Creator. Every Christian has, besides, an unction from the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in him, through whom he was born again, and by whose influence his spiritual life is maintained. There have been also various miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on the servants of God, and among these is that inspiration by means of which God has revealed himself in the Old and New Testaments. This inspiration, which, without any variation or exception, is claimed by the writers of the Scriptures, and which entitles the whole of them to be called "the word of God," is of the highest kind, by which they were "led into all truth." It consists in that communication made to their minds by the Spirit of God, of the ideas and words which they have engrossed in that sacred book. Nothing can more distinctly give us the true idea of inspiration, than these words in



Acts iv. 25, "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said."

This view of the matter does not require us to suppose, that, under this full inspiration, the ordinary exercise of the faculties of the writers was counteracted or suspended, or that their minds did not entirely go along with the ideas and words which were communicated to them. Nor is it any objection, that the words of Scripture are not considered unalterable, as may be shewn from parallel passages, or by the quotations from the Old Testament in the New, where they are sometimes made rather according to the sense than in the express words. The *meaning* undoubtedly is the great thing to be attended to; but that meaning will be either misstated or obscured, if words *perfectly* fit for the occasion are not *always* used.

Neither does the difference of style which we find among these writers at all conclude against their having the very words they were to write imparted to them. The style that was most proper was used, and the instruments employed were such, we may suppose, as that style was entirely natural to, flowing, like the words, with the full consent, and according to the particular tone of their minds. Accordingly, the whole



appears to have been carried on in consistency with the full conviction and approbation, as far as they understood what they said, of the writers themselves, yielding to the impression made on their minds as voluntary and intelligent agents. Nor is it any objection to the inspiration of words as well as ideas, that they often knew beforehand those things which they wrote, and were directed to refer to this knowledge of circumstances to establish their credibility; nor that they often appeal, in support of what they say, to its own evidence, or reason from principles granted by those whom they addressed; all which was entirely consistent with that "reasonable service" to which they were employed to call upon men to submit.

This full inspiration of the Scriptures is frequently denied, on the supposition that the Apostles themselves "sometimes candidly admit, that they are not speaking by inspiration, or that their inspiration is not of the highest kind." The candour of the Apostles is unquestionable; but this objection proceeds on a mistaken view of the meaning of the passages on which it is built.

In the 7th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul is supposed in some places to disclaim inspiration, and, in one



place, not to be certain whether he is inspired or not. At first sight, this will appear to be evidently contrary to the uniform style of this Apostle's writings, and very improbable, when, as a commissioned and accredited ambassador of Jesus Christ, he is answering certain questions put to him by a Christian church, to whom he had just before asserted, in the most explicit manner, that he spoke "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" and that he was addressing them "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Attention to these things might have prevented the adoption of the unfounded and mistaken meaning which has been affixed to the passages referred to. If just, it would tend to unsettle the minds of Christians respecting the inspiration of the Scriptures, and to render it uncertain when the Apostles speak as inspired men, and when they deliver a doubtful opinion of their own. No such indecision, however, attaches to the passages in question.

In answer to the question about marriage, Paul says, "I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." Does this mean, that the Spirit permitted him, but did not command him, to give the answer he had done? If the Spirit permitted this answer to be given, it must be ac-



according to the mind of the Spirit; for Paul could not have been permitted to say what was contrary to it. But this would have been a very extraordinary and unusual way of communicating that mind, and is plainly not what is here intended. The obvious meaning is, that what the Apostle here said was in the way of permission, not of commandment. "I speak this," says he, "as a permission, and not as a commandment." Again, at the 10th verse—"Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord." This commandment had been delivered by the Lord Jesus himself. The Apostle, therefore, had no new commandment to deliver to them, or no commandment from himself, but one which the Lord had given. "To the rest," says he, "speak I, not the Lord." Here there was no former commandment given by the Lord, to which he might refer them. On this point, therefore, he himself now delivers to them [the will of God. Indeed, so far was this commandment from having been given before, that it was a repeal of an old one, by which, under the Jewish dispensation, the people were commanded to put away their wives, if unbelievers. Can it be supposed, that the Apostle is speaking from himself, and not under the direction of the Holy Ghost, when he



is declaring the abrogation of what had been once the law of God?

“Now, concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful.” Here again no commandment had been formerly given, to which he could refer them; but he gave his judgment, or “sentence,” as one who was *faithful* to the charge committed to him. “I think also that I have the Spirit of God.” “In this, as in many other passages, the word translated, “I think,” does not mean doubting, but certainty.\* If Paul meant it to be understood, that he was not certain whether he was inspired or not, it would contradict all he has so often asserted on the subject of his inspiration. But so far from this being the case, and in order the more deeply to impress their minds with the importance of what he had said, he concludes by assuring them, that he was *certain* he wrote by the Spirit of God.

The only other passage in which this Apostle is supposed to disclaim inspiration, occurs in 2 Cor. xi. 17, “That which I speak, I speak it not

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\* See M'Knight on the Epistles; and Parkhurst, who refers to this very passage in M'Knight.



after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting." In this passage Paul does not refer to the authority, but to the example of the Lord. "I speak not according to the example or manner of the Lord, but after the manner of fools;" a manner which, as he tells them in the next chapter, they had compelled him to adopt.\*

Another passage in the First Epistle of Peter, i. 19, is frequently quoted, so as to invalidate the Apostolic testimony. Just before this passage, Peter declares, that on the mount of transfiguration, he and the other Apostles were eye witnesses of the majesty of Jesus Christ, and had

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\* Some explain this as an objection of those whom the Apostle addresses, as if he had said, "It is objected that that which I speak in this confidence of boasting, I do not speak according to the Lord, but as it were in foolishness." To which, in this view of the meaning, he replies in the next verse. This manner of introducing an objection, (although it does not appear to be the case here,) is common with Paul. An instance occurs in the next chapter, at the 16th verse, which is often misunderstood. Many suppose that the Apostle there admits that he was crafty, and caught those to whom he wrote with guile, whereas he means the very reverse, and strongly repels such an idea. "But be it so, I did not burden you." This you allow, but you say being crafty, I caught you with guile. To this he immediately replies, that he did not make a gain of them, neither did those whom he sent unto them.



heard the voice from heaven, which attested that he was the beloved Son of God. Yet, after this, Peter is supposed to refer Christians to the word of prophecy, as "more sure" than this testimony. Instead of this, which is evidently a very improper view of the passage, degrading to the testimony of the Apostles, he refers to the prophecies, now made "more firm" or "confirmed" by their fulfilment.

Two passages are quoted from Paul's Epistle to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 23, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." And 2 Tim. iv. 13, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." These passages, it is supposed, are of so unimportant a nature, that they cannot be the dictates of inspiration. Such a conclusion, however, is altogether unwarranted. The Epistles, although written by the inspired ambassadors of Christ, often refer to the private business and circumstances, both of the writers, and of those to whom they wrote. It has pleased God to give a great part of the instruction contained in the Scriptures in this way, which is manifestly the most practical method. If then a particular expression may not



seem to us to be of such importance as to entitle it to a place in the revelation of God, or worthy of being inspired by him, we are not on that account warranted to conclude against its inspiration. In this way we might take the liberty to expunge many parts of the Scriptures, for instance of the historical parts of the Old Testament, as appearing equally unimportant with the passages in question. But by doing this, we should take away part of what we are assured was *all given by inspiration of God*.

By the first of the above passages, however, we may learn a most useful lesson, from the information it gives, not only of the abstemiousness of Timothy, but of the care of their bodily health, which the servants of God are authorised by him to take, when engaged in his service, and the concern, in this respect, they should have for one another. The other passage is to the same purpose, and shews that it was lawful for the Apostle, in the midst of his public labours, to attend to such minute concerns as might be for his own accommodation or use. In this view, and perhaps in other respects, both passages teach Christians useful lessons. Were it lawful to give up the inspiration of parts of Scripture according to our opinion of their importance, what a flood-



gate would be opened for confusion and uncertainty ! Origen, who was born in the year 185, quoting Mark x. 50, “ And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus,” says, “ Shall we say that the Evangelist wrote without thought, when he related the man’s casting away his garment, and leaping and coming to Jesus, and shall we dare to say that these things were inserted in the Gospels in vain ? For my part, I believe that not one jot or tittle of the Divine instruction is in vain.—Are men to say that there is any thing impertinent or superfluous in the Scriptures of the Holy Spirit, though to some they may seem obscure ? But we are to turn the eyes of our mind to him who commanded these things to be written, and seek of him the interpretation of them.—The sacred books came from the fulness of the Spirit, so that there is nothing in the Prophets, or the law, or the Gospel, or the Apostles, which descends not from the fulness of the Divine Majesty.”

Some who are satisfied as to the inspiration of all the rest of the New Testament Scriptures, are doubtful concerning the inspiration of the three books written by Mark and Luke, who were not Apostles. From early accounts concerning these disciples, it is reckoned by many that they were



among the seventy whom Jesus sent out in Judea. We know for certain that they respectively accompanied Peter and Paul in their journeys, and are mentioned by these two Apostles with much regard. The Apostles not only received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, but by laying on their hands, imparted these gifts to other disciples. When Peter went down to Samaria, he laid his hands on the disciples there, who then received the Holy Ghost. When Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, he informed them that he longed to see them, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift. Paul had communicated a gift to Timothy, whom he employed, as he also did Titus, in directing the churches in his absence. "I put thee in remembrance to stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." By means of these gifts, those who possessed them were enabled to speak in languages they had never learned, and some of them to speak, by "revelation," the mind of God. There can be no reason then to doubt, that to Mark and Luke, considering the circumstances in which they stood with the Apostles, the best miraculous gifts were also communicated.

But the conclusive argument as to their inspi-



ration and fitness to contribute the parts they have done to the sacred volume, does not rest on any supposition, however good the grounds of it may be, but on the fact, that the first Churches, *under the immediate guidance and superintendence of the Apostles*, all received these books on an equal footing with the other Scriptures. The nation of Israel was appointed by God himself to be the depositories of the Old Testament Scriptures,—“Unto them were committed the oracles of God.” In like manner, to that nation which constitutes the kingdom of heaven, the New Testament Scriptures were entrusted. To it they were addressed and delivered. We appeal to the canon of the Jews with respect to the Old Testament, and we have the same strong ground of confidence, when we receive from the first churches the Scriptures of the New Covenant. As, therefore, the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, were received by them without dispute, were read by them in their assemblies on the Lord’s day, and taken for the rule of their duty, of equal authority with the other Scriptures, which we have already seen by several quotations from the early Christian writers; so we conclude with certainty, that these books stand on the same footing in point of au-



thority, in other words, of inspiration, with all the rest, and form a part of the words of Christ, by which men shall be judged at the last day.

It is often supposed that the historical parts of Scripture were written by men acquainted with the facts that are recorded, under an inspiration of *superintendence*, by which they were prevented from falling into any error, or of *elevation*, by which they were assisted and raised much above themselves. This opinion is evidently founded on very low and inadequate ideas of the historical parts of Scripture, and of its use. It supposes that these histories are little more to us than the narrative of the immediate facts they contain, in which we are not greatly concerned. But every fact they record is fraught with important meaning. This idea was so strongly impressed on the Jews, that they maintained that God had more care of the letters and syllables of the law, than of the stars in heaven; and that upon each title of it, whole mountains of doctrine hung. Hence every individual letter was numbered by them, and notice was taken how often it occurred. The facts of the Scripture history teach the character of God, and the character of man. They are the history of God's providence and ways,



and they point to the great event of the coming of the Son of God.

The prophets, and even angels, had but a partial understanding of the things which were afterwards to take place. Moses, it is evident, did not know, that, as being a type of Christ, it was necessary that his death should intervene before the people of Israel were led into the promised land. We have no reason to believe that he understood the import of all he wrote. For instance, that when he recorded the history of Sarah and Hagar, he knew the design for which it was recorded, and the use that was afterwards to be made of it. We cannot doubt that the prayer of David, "*Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law,*" would have been equally suitable for Moses, who wrote that law. On the ground, then, of the purpose which the historical parts of the Scriptures were intended to serve, in displaying the manifold wisdom of God, and in pointing to him who was the end of the law, we have sufficient reason to be convinced, that not only not Moses, but not all the angels in heaven, although acquainted with all the facts, and under the inspiration both of superintendence and elevation, were competent to



write the historical parts of the word of God. They neither possessed foresight nor wisdom sufficient for the work. In both respects, every creature is limited. The dictating of that law which is "*perfect*," of which every *jot* and every *tittle* was to be fulfilled, was, and necessarily must have been, the work of perfect, that is, of infinite wisdom. Had, then, the penman of the Scriptures been only superintended and elevated, we should have had a revelation in which there would have been no contradictions, and excellent, undoubtedly, in proportion to that elevation, whatever it may mean, but it would not have been *perfect*. Besides, in those histories, the thoughts and secret motives of men are often unfolded and referred to. Was any one but the Searcher of Hearts competent to this? Could angels have revealed them, unless they had been distinctly made known to them? If it be replied, that in such places the sacred writers enjoyed the inspiration of suggestion, we ask, where is this distinction pointed out? It is a distinction unknown in the Scriptures.

The *very words* which are used in the prophetic parts of Scripture must *necessarily* have been dictated, or in some way imparted, so as to lead the writers to use them. They did not always com-



prehend the meaning of their own words, “into which angels desired to look;” and in this case it was impossible that, unless the words had been dictated to them, they could have written intelligibly. The writings of the prophets constitute a great portion of the Old Testament Scriptures, and God claims it as his sole prerogative, to know the things that are to come. We are therefore certain *they* enjoyed full inspiration; and, as we have not anywhere a hint of different kinds of inspiration by which the Scriptures are written, is it not presumption to assert that there are different kinds? It is lowering the word of God, and taking something from it, without any Scriptural warrant for doing so.

The nature of the mission of the prophets and apostles, required the full inspiration which they assert they possessed. God never intrusted such a work as they had to perform to any man, nor any part of such work. It was God himself, “who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, *spake* in time past, unto the fathers, *by* the prophets.” That work, through which was to be made known, “to principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he pur-



posed in Christ Jesus," was not a work to be entrusted to any creature.

Of the complete divine direction necessary for such a service as was committed to him, Moses was aware, when the Lord commanded him to go to Pharaoh, and to lead forth the children of Israel from Egypt. In that work he intreated, that he might not be employed. This proved the proper sense he entertained of his own unfitness for it. But it was exceedingly sinful, and showed great want of faith, thus to hesitate after the Lord had informed him that he would be "with him." Moses was accordingly reproved for this, but the ground of his plea was allowed, and full inspiration, not only as to the subject of his mission, but as to the very words he was to employ, was promised. In answer to his objection, the Lord said unto him, *Exod. iv. 11, 12, "Who hath made man's mouth, or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind; have not I the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."* Moses still urged his objection, and the same reply is, in substance, repeated both in regard to himself and to Aaron. This full assistance then, which was at first promised to Moses, in general terms, was, for his



encouragement, made known in this particular manner, and was distinctly fulfilled. Accordingly, when afterwards, as the lawgiver of Israel, he addressed the people, he was enabled to preface what he was going to enjoin upon them with, "Thus saith the Lord," or, "These are the words which the Lord hath commanded, that ye should do them." In observing all the commandments that Moses commanded them, and in remembering the way by which the Lord had led them, Israel was to learn, that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that *proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.*" Signs were therefore shewn by the Lord, in order, as he said to Moses, "that the people may hear when I speak with them, and believe thee for ever." Thus, during the whole of that introductory dispensation, in which he was employed as a servant, the people were to do according to the word of Moses, and "to remember the law of Moses," and to *believe him*, till his service was superceded by the Son of God, when a voice from heaven, referring to Jesus Christ, proclaimed, "Hear *Him.*" Concerning Jesus, Moses was to write, not only for Israel, but for all nations, till the end of time.

In like manner, we learn, that "the word of



the Lord" came to the prophets, to Gad, to Nathan, and others, and their messages they often prefaced with, "Thus saith the Lord." "He that hath my word," saith Jehovah, referring to the prophets, "let him speak my word faithfully." "The word of our God," says Isaiah, "shall stand for ever." David says, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, "The Spirit of the Lord *spake* by me, and *his word* was in my tongue."

The uniform language of the Lord Jesus and his apostles, respecting the Old Testament Scriptures, shews, that, without exception, they were "the word of God." "The Scripture," says our Lord, "cannot be broken." John x. 35. Here he is speaking of the figurative use of a particular word, ("gods") which, without verbal inspiration, might not have been used; and, if used improperly, might have led to idolatry. Jesus refers to the Old Testament as of infallible authority. In quoting it, he says, "It is written." He speaks of the necessity of the law and the prophets being fulfilled in every particular. "Till heaven and earth pass, *one jot* or *one tittle* shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—"It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than *one tittle* of the law to fail."



When the Pharisees came to Jesus, and desired an answer respecting divorce, he replied, "Have ye not read, that *he which made them* at the beginning, made them a male and a female; *and said*, for this cause," &c. ? Thus, what is said in the history, either by Adam or Moses, at the formation of Eve, is appealed to as having the authority of a law. Adam was not a legislator, and nothing that Moses could say, unless dictated by God, could have the force of a law, to be quoted by our Lord. But what was then uttered, as in every other part of Scripture, where he who is employed as the penman speaks, was *said* by God himself, and *therefore* was binding, and is appealed to as such.

The apostles use similar language in their many references to the Old Testament Scriptures, which they quote as of decisive authority, and speak of them in the same way as they do of their own writings. "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour," 2 Peter iii. 2. And they call them "the oracles of God," Rom. iii. 2. What God says is ascribed by them to the Scriptures: "The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised



thee up, that I might shew my power in thee." So much is the word of God identified with himself, that the Scripture is represented as possessing and exercising the peculiar prerogatives of God: "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen;"—"The Scripture hath concluded all under sin;"—"For what saith the Scripture, Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This should teach us in what light we ought to view the historical parts of Scripture.

From the following passages, among others that might be adduced, we learn the true nature of that inspiration which belongs to the Old Testament: Matth. i. 22, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was *spoken of the Lord*, by the Prophet." Matth. ii. 15, "And was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was *spoken of the Lord*, by the prophet, saying, out of Egypt have I called my son." Matth. xxii. 43, "He saith unto them, how then doth David, *in spirit*, call him Lord?" Luke i. 70, "As *he spake by the mouth* of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." Acts xxviii. 25, "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word: well *spake the Holy*



*Ghost* by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers.” Rom. ix. 25, “As *he saith* also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.” 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17, “What, know ye not, that he which is joined to an harlot is one body; for two, *saith he*, shall be one flesh.” Here the words of Adam or of Moses are referred to (as was done by Jesus himself) as the words of God. Heb. i. 1. 5, “God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, *spake* in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.”—“For unto which of the angels *said he* at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.” Heb. iii. 7, “Wherefore, as the *Holy Ghost saith*, To-day, if ye will hear his voice.” Heb. x. 15, “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a *witness* to us, for after that *he had said*.” 1 Peter i. 11, “Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when *it testified* beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” 2 Peter i. 21, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God *spake* as *they were moved* by the Holy Ghost.” Acts iv. 25, “*Who, by the mouth of thy servant David hast said*, Why did the heathen rage?”



From the foregoing passages, we see in what sense Paul declares, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” He speaks only of one kind of inspiration ; and we find, from the above and other passages, that the words which men spake in these Scriptures were the *words* of God *spoken* by men ; and, therefore, sometimes they are quoted as the words of God, and sometimes as those of the speakers, which shews they were in fact both the one and the other.

The perfect inspiration which belongs to the Apostles, may be learned from the nature of that *service* to which they were appointed, from the *promises* which were given to them for the discharge of it, and also from their own *assertions*, the truth of which are attested, not only by the nature of their doctrine, but by the miracles they wrought.

The commission which the Lord gave his Apostles was in these words: Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Here we see, that the commission of the Apostles included the promulgation of the



whole doctrine, and of every regulation of the kingdom of God ; that it extended to all the world ; and that a promise was annexed to it, that the Lord himself would be present with them to the end of time, maintaining and giving efficacy to their testimony, which is recorded in the Scriptures.

This commission is exactly conformable to all that Jesus had at different times said to the Apostles. To Peter, at one time, he declared, Matt. xvi. 19, " And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Afterwards, he repeated this to all the Apostles : Matt. xviii. 18, " Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." To the same purpose, when he had breathed on them and said, " Receive ye the Holy Ghost," John xx. 22, he adds, " Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." In these respects, the Apostles were constituted the authoritative ambassadors of the Lord, and were appointed to an office in which they could have



no successors. The laws which, under that authority, were vested in them, which, by the inspiration of the Spirit, they were to promulgate, and the doctrine they were to deliver, was to be of perpetual and universal obligation. John xii. 48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words," says Jesus, "hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." In another place, to the same purpose, when speaking of the Apostles having followed him, he says to them, Matt. xix. 28, "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The word that the Apostles were to declare, should open and shut, should bind and loose, in heaven and in earth. It was his own word, the irresistible word of the Eternal God, to be uttered by them, by which he would at last judge the world. "For," says he, "he that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me;" which is to the same effect as when he says to the seventy disciples whom he sent out, "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." From the tre-



mendous importance then of the service committed to the Apostles, we may judge what kind of inspiration was necessary for those whose words were to be the words of the Judge of all. "We are unto God," say they, "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life, and who is sufficient for these things?"

The nature of this inspiration, we are also taught by the promises that were given to the Apostles respecting it. When Jesus first sent out his Apostles to proclaim to the house of Israel that his kingdom was at hand, he warned them of the reception they were to meet with, and that they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake. At the same time they were forbidden to use the means which would have been necessary, if in any measure they had been left to their own judgment. He commanded them to rely entirely on him, and promised them that inspiration which, when placed in such situations, would be necessary for them, Matt. x, 19, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." Mark xiii. 11, "But when they shall



lead you and deliver you up, take no thought before hand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; *for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.*" Language cannot more plainly express that the inspiration of the very words they were to utter was to be given to the Apostles. It was the Holy Spirit who was to speak by them, just as God had spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began.

If this inspiration was necessary for the Apostles, on particular passing occasions, when they were brought before judges and magistrates, how much more so when they were employed in recording the permanent laws of the kingdom of Christ? It must therefore be included in the declarations made by our Lord, in what he says in his last discourses, respecting the Comforter whom he was to send. And that those declarations did refer to the same inspiration, we are not left to doubt; for we hear the Apostle Paul, when afterwards he addresses a Christian church, asserting that *Christ spake in him*. When about to leave his disciples, Jesus says to them, John xiv. 26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my



name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto ye." And again, John xvi. 13, "when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come." After his resurrection, Jesus said to them again, John xx. 21, "Peace be unto you, as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." His last words to them on earth were these, Acts i. 8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Such were the promises given to the Apostles of what they were to receive, to fit them for that great work in which they were going to engage. We shall now hear their own declarations, in respect to the fulfilment of them.

On the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 4, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them *utterance*." Afterwards, when having been brought before the Jewish rulers, they had returned to their own company and prayed, Acts



iv. 31, "The place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the *word of God* with boldness." Hear with what authority an Apostle afterwards speaks, when addressing the Christians at Rome: Rom. xvi. 25, 26, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began; but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."—"Though we," says the same Apostle, Galatians i. 8, "or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."—"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."—"But I certify you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. ii. 9, "But, as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of



man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”—“Which things also we speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”—“For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him, but we have the mind of Christ.” 1 Cor. ii. 7, “We speak the wisdom of God.” Eph. iii. 4, “Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit.” 2 Cor. ii. 10, “To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also; for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ.” 2 Cor. xiii. 2, 3, “If I come again I will not spare, since you seek a proof of *Christ speaking in me*.” In the 7th of 1 Cor. 17, where some, as has been already noticed, imagine that the Apostle concludes with expressing a doubt whether he was inspired or not, he says, “so ordain I in all churches.” Most presumptuous language indeed, unless he could have added, as he does a little after, 1 Cor. xiv. 37, “If any man think



himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the *things that I write* unto you *are the commandments of the Lord.*" 1 Thess. ii. 13, "For this cause also, thank we God, without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, *the word of God.*" 1 Thess. iv. 8, "He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not *man* but *God*, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit." 1 Pet. i. 12, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into." 1 Pet. i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. i. 25, "The *word of the Lord* endureth for ever. And *this is the word* which by the Gospel is preached unto you."

If such was the inspiration of the Apostles and Prophets, we need not be surprised, that at the end of the book of the Revelation, which was given to John, we have these words: Rev. xxii. 18, 19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If



any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." It is to be remarked, that these words are at the end of that part of the Holy Scriptures which was last written, and so close the sacred canon. They are equally applicable to all other parts of it. Towards the conclusion of the writings of Moses, a similar caution is given: Deut. iv. 2, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." Again, in Prov. xxx. 5, 6, "Every word of God is pure. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." And the Old Testament Scriptures close with this solemn warning: "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, *which I commanded* unto him in Horeb for all Israel."

On the whole, then, we see the nature of that inspiration by which the Prophets and Apostles wrote. The manner of communicating the revelations might differ, as we learn from the book of Numbers xii. 6, 7, 8, but their certainty and authority was the same. "For the prophecy



came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God *spake* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Neither was it the Apostles who spoke, but it was the Spirit of their Father who spoke in, or by them. It is not for men then to fritter away this truth, and to introduce distinctions in the inspiration of the servants of God, unheard of in his "word;" and therefore totally unwarranted and unauthorized. It is not for men to say, "How can these things be?" No man can tell how, by a simple volition, he can move a finger. And shall "vain man, who would be wise, although man be born like the wild ass's colt," stumble at the *mode* of the operation of the Spirit of God, either in the act of regeneration, and his effective influence on the hearts of believers, or in that inspiration by which he verbally makes known his pleasure. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Lord is able to communicate his will in what way he pleases, although we cannot trace the manner of his operation. In the words spoken by the ass of Balaam, we have an example of this communication, through an unconscious and involuntary instrument. In Balaam himself we have



an example, through one who was conscious, but involuntary, in the declarations he made respecting Israel. In Caiaphas, through one who was voluntary in what he said, but unconscious of its import. And, in the writers of the Scriptures, we have an example of agents, both voluntary and conscious, but equally actuated by the Spirit of God. "They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—"If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."—"The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

Let believers be thankful for the clear distinct revelation which God has been pleased to vouchsafe of his will, of the future condition of man, and of the principles on which that condition shall be eternally fixed. The magnitude of those objects, involving the character and the glory of God, required, as we learn from Scripture, that what was so momentous, should not in any degree whatever be ultimately intrusted to fallible men. By the earnestness with which the Apostle Paul addresses the churches of Galatia, we learn what dreadful consequences must follow from the smallest alteration or addition to the Gospel. If an angel from heaven was to preach another Gospel, he was to be held accursed. Irænaeus, as we have seen, who conversed with Po-



lycarp the disciple of John, and who himself lived but a few years after that Apostle, says, concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures, “Well knowing that the Scriptures are *perfect*, as *dictated* by the word of God, and his Spirit.” And to the same purpose Origen speaks of the sacred books, as “*not the writings of men*, but that they have been *written and delivered to us from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*, by the will of the Father of all things, through Jesus Christ.” This full inspiration of the book of God should teach Christians to regard it with the highest veneration. Psalm xix. 7, “*The law of the Lord is perfect.*”

The testimony to the truth of the Scriptures, and consequently to the Messiah, which arises from their inspiration, is of the strongest kind. By presenting themselves to us as *inspired*, they bring the truth of their contents to the most decisive test. They occupy ground which nothing but *truth* and *perfection* could enable them to maintain. Could any thing absurd, or any thing wrong, be proved in the whole book? Could the smallest flaw in the character or doctrine of the Author of Salvation, any degree of weakness, or of want of wisdom, be discovered, they must immediately be compelled to relinquish this ground? The claim of inspiration is an as-



sertion of the infinite importance, and incomparable excellency of the matter which they contain, as what man, without them, never could have known; and also that it is delivered in a style suitable to the dignity of what they present. Has this been shewn to be otherwise? They contain many chains of prophecies, as well as multitudes of detached predictions, now fulfilling, or that have been fulfilled in different ages; and they defy the perspicacity of men to falsify a single one of them. They assert a number of facts respecting various particulars of the creation, age, and history of the world. Of a general deluge; of the descent of all mankind from a single pair; of the original state of man, as civilized, and not savage; of the origin of a variety of universal customs, otherwise unaccountable, as of sacrifices, and of the division of time by weeks. Yet, after all, the severest scrutinies of the most enlightened, as well as most inveterate opposers in ancient and modern times, not one fact which they assert has been disproved. On the contrary, these facts are constantly acquiring fresh evidence, from various sources. The harmony, too, of the doctrine of the several writers of Scripture, is particularly observable, and forms a striking contrast to the discordant opinions, and frequent inconsistencies, and self-



contradictions of the Greek and Roman writers, on almost every subject on which they treat.

“ The writers of the sacred Scriptures, of whom there are between thirty and forty, succeeded each other during the term of fifteen hundred years; some of them were princes or priests, others shepherds and fishermen. Their natural abilities, education, habits, and employments, were exceedingly dissimilar; and they wrote laws, history, prophecy, odes, devotional exercises, proverbs, parables, doctrines, and controversy, and each man had his distinct department; yet they all exactly coincide in the exhibition which they give us of the perfections, works, truth, and will of God; of the nature, situation, and obligation of man; of sin and salvation; of this world and the next; and, in short, of all things connected with our duty, safety, interest, and comfort, and in the whole of the religion inculcated by them. They all were evidently of the same judgment, aimed to establish the same principles, and applied them to the same practical purposes. Apparent inconsistencies may indeed perplex the superficial reader, but they will vanish after a more accurate investigation; nor could any charge of disagreement among the sacred writers ever be substantiated.”



## CHAP. VI.

*History of the Old Testament.*

THE correspondence between the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, written in ages so remote, and the ultimate accomplishment of the former, in that system to which, from the beginning, it was subservient, forms a demonstrative proof of their truth. The Holy Scriptures commence with a history of the creation of the world, of which they give the only rational and intelligible account that exists.\* They represent God, in the exercise of omnipotent power, calling the world into existence, reducing it to

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\* “ Compare the account of the creation which is given by Moses, with the ravings of Sanchoniatho, the Phenician philosopher, which he has dignified with the title of Cosmogony ; or compare it with the childish extravagancies of the Greek and the Latin poets, so justly likened to a sick man’s dreams ; and then say, whether any person of candour and discernment will not be disposed to exclaim, in the words of the prophet, “ What is the chaff to the wheat ! ”



order, and fitting it for the accommodation of its principal inhabitant, man. This was effected gradually, in the course of six days, in such a way as leaves time to contemplate one thing as it arises after another. Every thing was created perfect in its kind; and man was made in the image of God, and capable of enjoying communion with him.

The place of man's habitation is represented to have been a garden, which he was enjoined to dress and to keep. For the support of his life, he was to eat freely of all that it produced, the fruit of one tree alone excepted. This was reserved as a test of his obedience, which, every way applicable to his circumstances, would make it manifest whether or not he possessed a spirit of obedience to the will of God.

Tempted by one of a superior order of beings, who had previously rebelled against God, he transgressed the command, and fell from his state of innocence and happiness. In this situation, he stood exposed to the full rigour of the punishment which he had been informed was annexed to disobedience. But God, in judgment, remembered mercy; and, when all hope from every other quarter was cut off, interposed in his behalf, and provided a way of salvation. This sal-



vation was to be in all respects worthy of its author, and such as no other could either propose or effect. Salvation was to flow to the guilty through the medium of the woman, who was first in the transgression. In this salvation, the demands of justice were not to be compromised. Sin was not to go unpunished, neither was disobedience to obtain a reward. The abhorrence of God against the former was to be expressed in a manner the most awful; while eternal life and happiness, beyond the reach of forfeiture, were to be awarded, in consequence of the most perfect obedience to the law of God. But as, in no point of view, could the conditions of this covenant be fulfilled by man, who was already obnoxious to punishment, "God laid help," as the Scriptures express it, "on one that was mighty." In the fulness of time, he was to send forth his Son, "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons." Thus God so loved the world, that he was to give "his only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in him might not perish, but have eternal life." He was to make him to be sin who knew no sin, that they who should believe in his name might be made the righteousness of God in him; and, by



one offering, he was for ever to perfect them that are sanctified. Thus, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous."

The sentence, however, on account of disobedience, to the extent of temporal death, after a life of sorrow and trouble, was still to be carried into effect, even against those who should be heirs of the promised salvation. But although this would prove painful to flesh and blood, yet all ultimate evil arising from it was removed. The sorrows and troubles of life were to be overruled for good to all who, by faith, looked to the promised Saviour; while the sting of death, which is sin, was, as to them, to be taken away, and the victory to be wrested from the grave. Death was to transmit the soul to heaven, and the grave at length to yield up the body, that all who believed might thenceforth, in soul and body, be for ever with the Lord. These great truths, confirmed by miracles, and couched under the veil of types and prophecies, were gradually developed more and more under the Old Testament dispensation, till life and immortality were clearly brought to light by the Gospel.



This salvation, to be accomplished by such wonderful means, was announced to our first parents in the sentence passed on the serpent immediately after their fall. And thus a new and living way of acceptance by a Mediator was pointed out, through whom alone intercourse was hereafter to be maintained between God and man. From that time down to the coming of Christ, the promised seed, a period of 4000 years, a great and connected plan of preparation for this event was carried on, which forms the subject of the Old Testament Scriptures, including History, Miracles, Types, and Prophecies.

From the HISTORY we learn, that as soon as the sentence of sorrow and death was pronounced, the mercy which had been intimated to our first parents began to take effect. God made coats of skins, and clothed them. This would greatly encourage their hopes, and strengthen their confidence in the promised blessing, which thus began to operate in this token of the fatherly care of God. It was also well adapted to alleviate their heavy trial, of being immediately after driven out from the garden, to cultivate the ground, now cursed on their account, of which, in the sweat of their face, they were to eat the produce.



Sin soon appeared among their first descendants, in the most hideous and distressing form, in the murder of his younger brother by their eldest son. Thus it was evident, that the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent was already at work. "Cain," says the Apostle, "was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

The history of Adam and his posterity, which soon became numerous, is carried forward, in a very compendious manner, from this time till the flood. Cain, driven out from the presence of the Lord, employed himself in building a city, which he called after his first born son. But, after relating the names of some of his descendants, the history is continued in the line of Seth, whom Eve acknowledged to be given her by the Lord, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. The object of Scripture history is not to record those events which lead to temporal aggrandizement; these it but touches on occasionally, and only as they stand connected with the great and only end it has in view,—the coming of Messiah, and the setting up of his kingdom.

In the days of Enos, the son of Seth, it is re-



marked, that “men began to call upon the name of the Lord,” which, whether it be meant that at that time they first began to worship God in public assemblies, or that a more marked distinction then took place between the children of God and the men of the world, certainly intimates that some visible progress was made in attention to the service of God.

Further progress is recorded, in unfolding the plan of redemption, in the days of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. “He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” These words are the more remarkable, as in summing up the lives of the other antediluvians, whose ages were prolonged to the extraordinary term of nearly a thousand years, it is uniformly said, “and he died.” Enoch was a distinguished example of one who yielded acceptable obedience to God, and held intimate communion with him. We are informed by an Apostle, that he prophesied of the coming of the Lord, and warned ungodly sinners of the consequence of their ungodly deeds, proclaiming to them a future judgment, and the separation that would then be made between the righteous and sinners. At last, in confirmation of the great truths he had been employed to declare, “he was translated, that he should not see



death, and was not found, because God translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." Thus, by means of Enoch, a great increase of light was vouchsafed, and a striking manifestation was given of a future state, and also of the restoration of the body as well as of the soul, from the ruins of the fall, and of both being delivered from death. The translation of Enoch before the law, and that of Elijah under the law, as well as the ascension to heaven after the law, of him who, having obtained the victory over death and the grave, is "the first fruits of them that slept," are extremely important events, not only as making manifest, in their several periods, the reality of a future state, but as proving that the people of God, in every period, are partakers of the same salvation.

The most remarkable occurrence after the translation of Enoch, is a great falling away in the service of God, which arose from the sons of God intermarrying with the daughters of men. This connection between the children of God and the children of the wicked one, that is, of believers and unbelievers, the ruinous consequences of which are so often pointed out in Scripture, opened a floodgate to wickedness. The effect soon appeared in their children, who, instead of



obtaining “ a good report through faith,” “ became mighty men of renown.”—“ The earth was filled with violence,”—“ and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and that continually.” The consequence was, that God overwhelmed the earth with a flood, “ the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” A great convulsion took place, of which the earth every where bears evident marks to this day. It was covered with water during five months, which prevailed above the highest hills. For 120 years, Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, had given warning to the ungodly world, and called them to repentance ; but they refused to listen. “ They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away.”

In this general wreck, occasioned by the wickedness of man, Noah only, with his family, and all the animals in pairs, were saved in an ark, which, by faith, being warned of God, he had prepared, and in which he remained a year and ten days. Exact computations have been made of the size of the ark, of the number of animals preserved in



it, and of the quantity of food necessary for their sustenance, from which it is found to have been of sufficient dimensions to contain the whole. Miraculous interposition seems to be seldom, if ever, resorted to, where ordinary means will accomplish the end. The objection which is sometimes raised, “whence came such a quantity of water as was necessary to overflow the earth, and what became of it afterwards,” is too trifling and absurd to merit notice. “Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth.” God who, “in the beginning, created the heavens and the earth,” and who will at last destroy them, produced and removed the waters of the flood. Thus it pleased God that the curse which had been pronounced on the earth should once be executed in its universal destruction. At this time the life of man was greatly shortened in comparison of what it had been before.

Immediately after the flood, when the Lord commanded Noah to come out of the ark, he accepted the sacrifice that Noah offered, and gave him a new grant of the earth, engaging by a covenant, whereof the rainbow is a token, that till the end of time it should no more be destroyed. “And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said



unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." The grant of animal food, (as that of vegetable food had formerly been given to Adam,) was now made to man, into whose hands all the animals were delivered, and the fear and dread of him was impressed on them.

When men began again to increase in the earth, they were all of one speech, and, in opposition to God, and in pursuit of vain glory, being desirous "to make themselves a name," they set about building a city, and a tower of prodigious height. This appears to have been the city of Babylon, which in after ages was so remarkable for its oppression of the people of God, and for the final ruin which was brought upon it. This work seems to have been undertaken from a distrust of God's promise that he would no more overflow the earth with water, and in defiance of his authority. On this occasion God visibly shewed his displeasure, by confounding their language, and scattering them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Notwithstanding these visible tokens of God's abhorrence of sin, in destroying nearly the whole inhabitants of the earth by a flood, and in afterwards confounding their language, and scattering them over the face of the earth, to prevent their



ungodly combination, and the progress of wickedness, the whole earth soon relapsed into idolatry. Even that line of which the Messiah was to descend, partook of the general corruption. But now it pleased God to interpose in another remarkable manner, by raising up Abraham, who was called the friend of God. As in Abraham's family God intended to carry forward his great plan of salvation, he saw good to separate him from all his kindred, and to call him into a distant country. In that land he was to live as a pilgrim and a sojourner, detached from the contagion of idolatry; and there his posterity was to remain, a people separate from all the rest of the world. This calling of Abraham took place about 2000 years before the coming of Christ, and about the same distance of time from the first promise to Adam.

To Abraham, at different times, God renewed the promise given to our first parents, confirming it by an oath, with the limitation of the blessing to immediate descent from him. "In *thy* seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Along with spiritual blessings, and both as pledges of these, and as a medium through which they should be conveyed, he also promised to him great temporal blessings. "Abraham believed



in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." This being recorded, shewed the manner in which the blessing of the righteousness to be provided in the obedience of the Son of God was to be conveyed, even by faith.

Abraham's faith was long tried; and notwithstanding the promise of a numerous offspring, and the blessing of salvation included in it, Sarah his wife, till long after it could be expected in natural course, bore no child. The promise was, however, from time to time, renewed to Abraham, and he was strong in faith, giving glory to God. At length Isaac was born, in whose line the promises were to run. When Abraham saw Isaac born out of the common course, and beyond any expectation he could have entertained, except what rested on his confidence in God, he received a pledge of the fulfilment of every promise that had been made to him.

A minute history is given of Abraham's family, and of his son Ismael by a bondwoman, as well as of his son Isaac by Sarah his wife. Ishmael having been discovered mocking Isaac, Sarah insisted that he should be cast out of the family. This might appear to convey nothing but a private history of such an occurrence as was likely to happen in any family in similar circumstances.



But the Scripture history is written by inspiration of God, and is to be read with a very different kind of respect and attention from what is due to other writings. In this transaction, leaving the bad passions of human nature to exert themselves in a way that is very common, God gave a representation of the two covenants, the old and the new; the first made with Israel after the flesh, the second with Israel after the spirit, on account of which the former is now cast out and abolished.

In the days of Abraham, God gave another awful example “of the certainty of the vengeance of eternal fire unto all those that after should live ungodly.” The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, on account of the dreadful wickedness of their inhabitants, were destroyed by fire. This destruction came upon them in the same unexpected manner in which the flood had formerly come upon the earth, and found them, as the former had overtaken all its inhabitants, entirely engrossed with the things of this world. “They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.” From this catastrophe, Lot only, with his



two daughters, was delivered. Thus God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot, his kinsman, out of the midst of the overthrow. This destruction was not only calculated to impress the fear of God on the inhabitants of that country, and on all who heard of it, but also tended to the safety of his servants, leading the people to respect these strangers who by the command of God sojourned among them. It would likewise teach the latter to keep themselves and their families more separate, both from the people and the manners of the land.

After Abraham's death, God renewed his covenant to Isaac, saying, (Genesis xxvi. 3, 4,) "I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy Father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." He renewed it again to Jacob, the son of Isaac, at Bethel, (Genesis xxviii. 13, 14, 15,) when "he dreamed, and behold a ladder sat upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold the Lord



stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy Father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Jacob afterwards received a striking confirmation of the promised blessing, when at Peniel, on his way to meet his brother Esau, he saw "God face to face," in the human form, who blessed him there. On this occasion, the Messiah, by anticipation, manifested himself in a very clear and remarkable manner, as when, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, he had appeared as a traveller to Abraham; and afterwards to Joshua, as a man in armour, "the Captain of the Lord's host;" and likewise, in similar ways, to others, on different occasions, during the Old Testament dispensation.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, through a remark-



able train of providential occurrences, became governor of the land of Egypt ; and in a time of dearth, brought down his father and brethren to be sustained, in that land, out of the stores he had provided. In that country the posterity of Jacob remained after his death till they had become a great multitude. One of the successors of that Pharaoh who had made Joseph governor of Egypt, oppressed the children of Israel in a very grievous manner, and at length, beginning to be alarmed at their increasing numbers, attempted to exterminate them, giving orders to destroy all their male children. At this time, God raised up in Moses a deliverer for his people. Moses, soon after he was born, as he could no longer be concealed, was laid by his mother at the side of the river Nile, in an ark made of bulrushes. Pharaoh's daughter coming to the place, observed the child, and being struck with his beauty, adopted him as her son, and educated him in all the learning of the Egyptians. Truly "the wrath of man shall praise God, the remainder of wrath he will restrain." Pharaoh's command to drown all the male children of the Hebrews, was the means of introducing one of them into his palace, there to find an asylum, and to enjoy the best means



of education, that he might be qualified to be afterwards the leader of that people whom Pharaoh wished to destroy, and the instrument of making that destruction rebound upon him.

Moses, when he was forty years old, in visiting his brethren the Israelites, and seeing one of them suffer wrong, defended him, and slew the Egyptian, his oppressor. In consequence, he was obliged to flee from Egypt, to save his own life. Having remained 40 years in the land of Median, where he had taken refuge, the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, in a bush in the wilderness of Sinai, as he watched the flock of his father-in-law, calling himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. God commanded Moses to go back to Egypt, and from thence to lead out his people, giving him, at the same time, power to verify his divine commission. Moses immediately returned to Egypt, and required Pharaoh to allow the people of Israel to depart. Pharaoh, in consequence of many distressing signs, wrought by Moses, had frequently promised to consent to this, and had as often retracted. At length a decisive sign was given, in the death of all the first-born of Egypt, in one night, while those of the Israelites were preserved. Upon this occasion, Pharaoh and his people sunk under the contest



they had hitherto maintained with Moses, and were urgent that the Israelites should depart. After they were gone, Pharaoh having repented of the permission he had given, pursued and overtook them among the mountains, on the shore of the Red Sea. Here they must inevitably have been taken or destroyed, but God opened a way by which they passed through the sea in safety, while Pharaoh and his army, attempting to follow them, were overwhelmed by the water and perished. Thus the descendants of Abraham, in the line of Isaac, when they had almost entirely relapsed into idolatry, were separated, as he had formerly been, from the nations with whose manners they were infected.

“The sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self same day, it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.” Thus the Lord performed his gracious promise to Abraham, which Moses here records. After-



wards Joshua, when he had led the people into the promised land, could, at his death, make to them this solemn appeal : “ And behold this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed, of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.” And again, Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, says, “ Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel ; according to all that he promised, there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.”

The Israelites were now beyond the Red Sea on their way to the land which God had promised to their fathers. They might soon have been carried to the end of their journey ; but having important purposes to serve by it, God saw good to detain them in the wilderness 40 years. There they were to be formed into a separate nation, under circumstances different from those of any other people that ever had been on earth. God himself was to be their King and lawgiver, and was to make with them a peculiar covenant. They were also to be reclaimed from the superstition and idolatry of the people whom they had



left, into which they had drunk deep; and by witnessing for so long a time a train of miraculous interpositions in their behalf, a deep and lasting impression was to be produced.

Soon after they had passed through the Red Sea, the law was given to Israel as a nation, and the promise of the inheritance of Canaan, and of many peculiar privileges, was ratified to them. This law consisted of the ten commandments, the rule of universal and everlasting obligation, originally written on the heart of man, with the addition of the duty to observe the weekly Sabbath, instituted from the creation—of a code of regulations for their civil conduct—and of various institutions of religious service, of which sacrifice formed a prominent part. The ten commandments were first of all delivered to the whole people, accompanied by thunderings and lightnings, and the sound of a trumpet from the top of Mount Sinai, while the mountain trembled. They were uttered by the voice of God himself, from the midst of a cloud and fire, the usual symbols of the divine presence. As soon as these commandments were pronounced, the people of Israel, unable to bear any longer the terror of so tremendous a scene, and to listen to the extensive requirements of so holy a law, im-

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mediately removed and stood afar off. "And they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." God approved of their request, and Moses was appointed to act as mediator between God and the people. In this appointment, a striking representation was given of the appointment of one who should be able to appear in the presence of God for his people, and to fulfil, in every respect, the demands of that law, which all had come short of and broken. The further communications from God were received by Moses, who delivered them to the people.

The ten commandments were inscribed on two tables of stone by the finger of God himself; and the rest of the first five books of Scripture were written by Moses. One of the tribes was set apart for the priesthood. The tabernacle, of which the exact pattern had been shewn to Moses, was erected, as the visible habitation of the God of Israel, in which he was "to dwell among them." And the pillar of cloud and of fire that had conducted them through the sea, rested on the tabernacle, and directed them in all their wanderings while in the wilderness. Thus, in the language of the Apostle, to Israel pertained "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law,



and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

While, however, these distinguished and unexampled privileges were bestowed on the nation of Israel, they were expressly informed, that the Lord had not chosen them on account of their being great as a people, for they were reminded that they had been the fewest of all people ; but on account of his own sovereign pleasure, and because of the promise he had made unto their fathers. On the other hand, they were often declared to be a stiff-necked people. This was analogous to the whole procedure of Him " who giveth not account of his matters," and who has mercy on whom he will have mercy. " Blessed is the man whom he chuseth, and causeth to approach unto him." So in like manner, under the New Testament dispensation, " God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, *that no flesh should glory in his presence.*"



Of the character of the Israelites, however, many form a more unfavourable opinion than is warranted by fact. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light," and in the Scriptures divine truth shines forth in so conspicuous a manner, that every thing of a contrary nature is strikingly exposed. On this very account, the character of those whose histories are recorded in the Scriptures, appear to be worse than that of other men. When we peruse the histories of the Greeks and Romans, we read very partial accounts. The great facts are indeed recorded. We have a detail of battles, and abundant proof that the earth was filled with violence; but all is glossed over and concealed under the guise of false principles, denominated virtues, while the secret motives of the actors in these scenes are unknown. In the Scriptures, on the contrary, nothing is disguised or kept back. As far as relates to the subject in hand, all is impartially narrated; and the whole being brought forward in continual connection with the purity and excellency of the Divine character, the contrast is more apparent and striking. Not attending to these things, the men of the world are often shocked with the narratives which the Scriptures contain. The character of the people of Israel



appears to them to be greatly worse than that of the grossest idolaters ; and the accounts given in Scripture of men whose conduct on the whole stands approved by God, seems to sink below that standard of moral rectitude, to which they suppose they themselves, and many who make no pretensions to religion, have attained. Not being accustomed to try themselves by a perfect standard, but by one reduced on principle to their own "imperfection," as they term it, they are not aware of the real state of human nature, either in themselves or others, and so are misled in these respects. Christians, who are all in a degree acquainted with the "deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart," form a very different estimate of these faithful narrations in the word of God, which are to them an irrefragable testimony to its truth. Such narratives are not to be met with any where else, even in books whose principles are derived from the Scriptures. When we compare with them the biography even of the most enlightened Christians, the contrast is manifest and striking.

On account of the rebellious conduct of the Israelites, on hearing the report concerning the strength of the country, from those who had been



sent to examine the promised land, an exemplary punishment was inflicted on them, and till it was executed they were detained in the wilderness. With only two exceptions, the carcasses of all who had been above 20 years of age, when they came out of Egypt, fell in the wilderness. On this occasion the life of man was shortened to its present usual period. Before the flood, it had been about 900 years in length. But immediately after that catastrophe, it was brought down in the first generation to 600, and in the next to between 400 and 500 years. Afterwards it became shorter and shorter, till the time of this murmuring of the Israelites at the report of the spies, when it was reduced to its present standard, according to the 90th Psalm, which Moses, as is supposed, wrote on that occasion: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away."

After the expiration of 40 years, the people entered the promised land, and by the command of God drove out those nations that inhabited it, and took possession of the country. This occupation of their land, and the execution inflicted



on the people, had been purposely delayed, *till the measure of their iniquity was full.*

Objections have been daringly brought forward against the authenticity of the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, and through them against that of the New, on account of the command to extirpate the Canaanites, as if it were repugnant to every idea we ought to entertain of the character of God. Such impious objections proceed on partial and inconsiderate views. Is it in any respect contrary to the moral character of God, that, under his righteous government, men should be punished for their sins? Might not God, with equal justice, punish those nations whom "the land spewed out," on account of their iniquities, as inflict vengeance on Sodom and Gomorrah, and on the whole inhabitants of the earth, old and young, by a deluge? Might he not also involve in this visitation, the children as well as those who were grown up, as he does in other more common visitations? Has not the whole human race forfeited life by sin, in consequence of which they are one after another removed by death? And, is it not a fact of daily occurrence, that death reigns over children "who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression?"



Might not the Supreme Ruler of the universe employ the sword of the Israelites, as well as a fever or an earthquake, to execute his purpose? Or is objection taken to his making use of human executioners, on account of the supposed bad moral effects to those who are employed in such services? But do not human governments employ men as executioners of their laws, without which all government must be at an end, and even whole armies when thought necessary? Yet we hear no objection made to this, because of the moral effects on those armies. On the contrary, the being employed in them is reckoned an honourable service. And shall men dare to arraign the conduct of the Judge of all the earth, and foster themselves in the unbelief of the very existence of his government, because, in executing justice, he acts in a way which even they themselves practise and allow? It must be also remembered, that the Israelites were not commanded to cultivate the principles, and to act from the spirit of treachery or cruelty. The precept to them required only an external action,—the taking away the property and life of those who had no right to either, but what arose solely from the grant of God, which, besides, they



had justly forfeited by their rebellion and wickedness.

This merited and awful visitation of God on an idolatrous and profligate race, was calculated, like the former instances of divine vengeance by water and by fire from heaven, and the destruction of the Egyptians in the sea, to produce the most lasting moral effects, not only on the Israelites, and on the surrounding nations, but on all who shall hear of it till the end of time. Under the Old Testament, there was more need of extraordinary and visible manifestations of the wrath of God against sin, than since the eternal misery of the impenitent in a future state has been so clearly made known under the Gospel ; and especially since the justice of God has been so awfully displayed in the sufferings of the Redeemer. They were solemn warnings to all who, through the forbearance of God, do not experience the just retribution of sin for a season, that the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished, and that, though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not escape.

The people of Israel having arrived in Canaan, the service of God, which had been instituted in the wilderness, was more fully regulated and ob-



served ; and the tabernacle, with the ark of the testimony, was set up at Shiloh. For a considerable time, the nation continued to be governed by judges, whom God raised up and qualified, both for administering the laws, and for defending them from their surrounding enemies, or delivering them from those nations by whom, on account of their sins, God had suffered them to be subdued.

At length, becoming dissatisfied with that form of government which had been appointed over them, and desirous to increase their consequence and means of defence, the Israelites clamorously demanded of the prophet Samuel, that they, like the other nations, should have a king. Their request was granted, and Saul was chosen. At the beginning of his reign, he was successful in defeating their enemies ; but, towards the end of it, having manifested his disregard of God, he was slain in battle, and the kingdom given to David, whom God set up to be a distinguished type of the Messiah, of whom he was the progenitor.

By means of David, the city of Jerusalem, which was before inhabited partly by the Jebusites, whom the children of Israel had been unable to expel, became the capital of the kingdom



of Israel. The Jebusites were wholly subdued, and the city was appointed as the place to which, as had been intimated in the writings of Moses, the tribes should go up to worship. Thither David brought the ark of God, and prepared to erect a house to contain it. But, as he had been much engaged in war, he was not permitted to build it, that honour being reserved for his son Solomon. David, however, was allowed to provide materials; and the exact pattern or model after which this house was to be constructed, was given to him "by the Spirit," which he communicated to Solomon in writing. David was also employed to complete all that part of the worship of Israel which had not been delivered to Moses, nor could have been observed till this settled habitation was provided for the ark of God.

The Temple was accordingly built by Solomon, who succeeded his father David; and the whole of the instituted worship of God delivered for that dispensation, was completely set up. At this time, the promises of temporal good things to Israel were fulfilled in their largest extent. Their prosperity was great under Solomon's reign. The people of the land, who from the first had remained unsubdued, had in the end of David's reign been completely brought



under. “And Judah and Israel dwelt safely every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beershebah, all the days of Solomon.”—“Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating, and drinking, and making merry.”

But after Solomon's time, the power of Israel began gradually to decline. In the reign of Rehoboam, his son, ten of the tribes revolted, and left with him only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. As the latter of these tribes was very small, the whole who remained were denominated Jews, from the name Judah. These two tribes, with the tribe of Levi, which returned to Rehoboam, continued under the government of the kings the descendants of David, till at length they were subdued and carried captive to Babylon. This captivity appears to have had the most salutary effect in finally reclaiming the Jews from that tendency to idolatry, through which they were so often before led away from the worship of the true God, and had brought on themselves the greatest calamities.

Afterwards they were restored by Cyrus to their own land, and the Temple, which had been destroyed, was rebuilt. They continued, however, generally to be in subjection to one foreign



nation or another, till the time of the coming of Christ. And it is wonderful, during that period of uncommon shaking and overturning of the nations, that although the land of Judea lay in the midst of the contending parties, and was often the seat of war, they were not entirely swallowed up. They were notwithstanding preserved and brought through the calamities they experienced, from the Babylonians, the Persians, the Macedonians, and at last from the Romans, who successively subdued one another. All, however, that took place, directly tended to promote the great purpose which God had in view, in separating the people of Israel from the other nations, and to fulfil the promises of salvation made at the beginning to Adam, and so often renewed. The effecting of this great end nothing could resist; and all those occurrences that appeared calculated to oppose and to thwart it, were overruled, to be entirely subservient to this object, and in the most remarkable manner to contribute to its accomplishment.

Every thing, as we learn by other histories, (the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures being now closed,) continued to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. The long captivity formerly in Babylon, and the frequent subjugations



which the Jews afterwards experienced, were the means of dispersing many of them through the greater part of the civilized world. In Esther's time, there were Jews scattered throughout the whole Persian empire, from India to Ethiopia. And about 200 years before the coming of Christ, they were settled throughout the different countries dependent on Greece and Rome.

After the Babylonish captivity, the copies of the law were greatly multiplied; and in every city where there were any considerable number of Jews, synagogues were set up, in which they assembled, and where the law was publicly read every Sabbath day. In connection with this, the translation of the Scriptures into the Greek language, about 60 years after Alexander's conquests, contributed greatly to make known the expected coming of the Messiah. This translation, which goes by the name of the Septuagint, and remains to this day, had become necessary to many of the Jews, who were born in foreign countries, where the Greek language was spoken. Afterwards, in all countries, except Judea, they commonly made use of it in their synagogues. By this means the people of these countries had an opportunity of perusing



the scriptures, and of hearing them read in their own language.

At length, between 60 and 70 years before the appearance of the Messiah, the Romans conquered the country of Judea, and soon after the Roman empire was established in its greatest extent, and the nations of the world were united under its government. A direct communication was, in consequence, opened from one country to another. This, together with the erection of the Jewish synagogues, and the general use of the Greek language, tended greatly to facilitate the execution of that commission which the Apostles were afterwards to receive, to “go into all the world, and to preach the Gospel to every creature.”

One thing more was now ordered in the course of divine Providence, to prepare the way for Him, who was the “desire of all nations.” The Roman government, towards the end of the republic, although it had subdued the rest of the world, was itself in a very unsettled state. But about thirty years before the birth of Christ, Augustus Cæsar having succeeded in putting down his rivals, became the first Roman Emperor. Augustus continued, however, with some intervals, to be engaged in wars, in subduing his ene-



mies, and in establishing the state of the empire, till the very year in which Christ was born, when all was terminated in tranquillity; and, in token of peace, which lasted twelve years, the temple of Janus, at Rome, was shut. Thus the world, which had been in a continual convulsion for many hundred years, was, at this important hour, settled in universal tranquillity.

Let us now look back, and observe the remarkable concurrence of circumstances by which He to whom all his works are known from the beginning, and who ruleth in heaven and in earth, prepared the way for the coming of his Son. The fittest country on earth, as is evident at this day, after all the discoveries in geography that have been made, was provided. It is situated in the very centre of the world, and from it the communication is easier and shorter than from any other point, to Europe, to Africa, to the distant parts of Asia, and from thence to America, by the strait where, according to modern discoveries, these two continents nearly meet. A nation was prepared and put in possession of this country, where, under the particular providence of God, and by means of a written revelation of his will, they maintained his worship uncorrupted, when all the other nations of the world had



fallen into idolatry. There they were preserved from being swallowed up by the great heathen monarchies with which they were surrounded, and by which, as a punishment for their sins, they were often overrun.

The world was in the mean time agitated by the most dreadful contentions, and experienced the greatest revolutions, till it was completely subdued by one people, and brought under a government, the most powerful and the most civilized that had ever existed. At this time learning and philosophy had risen to their greatest height. "Almost all improvements of the human mind," says Mr Hume, "had reached nearly to their state of perfection about the age of Augustus." A full trial was therefore made, of what human wisdom and science could effect in discovering the way to happiness, which was the great enquiry among the philosophers. But all of them wandered in the dark, amidst an endless variety of absurd opinions, without being able to come to any satisfactory conclusion on the subject.

After a proof had thus been given of the truth of the declaration that "the world by wisdom knew not God," the time arrived when the Sun of Righteousness was to arise with heal-



ing in his wings. That child was now to be born, whose name was to be called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age, the Prince of Peace." A general expectation of his appearance was excited, and a universal peace was established, as a proper prelude for ushering him into the world. All that concerned the coming of the Messiah was to be made known in the fullest manner, and so as to give every opportunity for the immediate investigation and the future transmission of the testimony of so remarkable an event. "This thing was not done in a corner." That revelation which was to be delivered to mankind of the way which God had provided for them to escape from condemnation and death, and to attain eternal life, was not to appear in such a manner, that its origin could only be traced to some remote and obscure country, and to some distant and barbarous age. At the end of 4000 years from the creation of the world, it was to be made known in the most cultivated period of Greece and Rome. It was to originate, as Gibbon has characterized them, "in an age of science and history," and "in a celebrated province of the Roman empire."

Thus we have seen a series of events taking place, from the first promise given to Adam, in



the preservation of one family from the general catastrophe of the flood; in the selection of an individual, highly favoured of God, to whom that promise was renewed; in the separation from other nations of a whole people who descended from him, to whom was delivered a written revelation of the will of God, and in the various unparalleled train of circumstances which marks their history from its commencement, all tending to one point, and all subservient to one grand design.



## CHAP. VII.

*Miracles of the Old Testament.*

THE history we have been considering, stands connected with a train of miraculous agency, from which it cannot be separated. Miracles are proper and direct proofs of the immediate interposition of God. Those laws by which God conducts the government of the material creation, were originally adjusted, and continue to be carried into effect by himself; and we have no reason to suppose, that without his special permission, any other being can exercise power over them. There are various other proofs of the truth of the Scriptures; but that of miracles, wrought to attest the doctrine they contain, is of itself conclusive. Nor can this proof be invalidated by an appeal to miracles said to be performed, besides those which the Scriptures record and account for.

There are two instances in Scripture of miracles



apparently wrought by inferior agents, which deserve to be noticed. One instance is that of the Egyptian magicians. Three of the miracles that Moses performed before Pharaoh, the magicians imitated. They cast down their rods, which became serpents; they turned water into blood; and they produced frogs. What was thus done in imitation of Moses, may, without contradicting that attestation to divine interposition which miracles are asserted in Scripture to afford, be fairly accounted for in one of the following ways. The magicians, by using slight of hand, might only seem to convert their rods into serpents; similar tricks being very common in the East. They might make water assume the appearance of blood, which, with a small quantity, can be easily done; and they might appear to produce frogs, when the country was full of them. If this was the case, the Scriptures, in relating this matter, speak, as is common, of what appeared to be done, as if it really was done. The jugglers in India, it is well known, are particularly dextrous in their legerdemain tricks, especially respecting serpents. Bell of Antermoney mentions in his Travels, that when he was at the court of China, he was much alarmed by a trick of the jugglers, very similar to the above appear-



ance. One of them threw his cap on the floor, out of which immediately issued a great number of serpents.

If, on the other hand, the signs of the Egyptian magicians were real, then power, it appears, was given to some malignant spirit, (as we know was the case in those trials that were brought upon Job,) to perform what was done in order to harden Pharaoh's heart. It cannot be maintained that this would have been improper or unjust. Pharaoh could not complain of injustice in this, seeing he was deliberately acting towards the whole nation of Israel in a manner which he knew to be most cruel, and was wilfully shutting his eyes against evidence of a divine message delivered to him by Moses, and setting himself to oppose it. It was therefore just to allow him to be caught in his own snare, and to give him up to strong delusion. Besides, sufficient and paramount evidence was after all given, that he was fighting against God. To countervail that evidence, miracles should have been wrought to set aside the miracles of Moses, such as restoring the river to pure water, and removing the swarms of frogs. Till this was done, or at least till miracles of equal power were performed, the evidence of those of Moses



remained in full force, notwithstanding that on a small scale an imitation of them was presented; while the swallowing up of the serpents of the magicians by the serpent of Moses, evidently decided the question between them. In addition to all this, miracles of a similar kind were continued by Moses, which the Egyptians could not imitate, and against whose effect they were unable to guard themselves. This constrained them to declare to Pharaoh, "this is the finger of God." Pharaoh's persisting then to withstand the attestations before him of divine interposition, did not proceed from want of evidence, but from rebellious obstinacy, in which, by his own devices, he was permitted to harden himself. In this view, the case was exactly similar to that of Ahab, the rebellious king of Israel, when, as we know, a lying spirit was allowed to take possession of his prophets to harden him to his destruction. At the same time he also had sufficient intimation of his danger from a true prophet of the Lord. By such examples men are warned not to be "mockers, lest their bands be made strong."

The other instance in Scripture referred to, respecting miracles, occurs in the case of Saul,



when, in the course of his opposition to God, he consulted a woman who was said to be possessed of a familiar spirit. It is not to be supposed that this woman had power to call up Samuel, whom Saul wished to consult, nor does this by any means appear from the narrative. But before the sorceress could prepare her enchantments for the purpose of soothing and flattering Saul, the prophet Samuel, commissioned by God, appeared to her surprise and terror, and denounced the judgment of death upon Saul. We are certain that in this case, Samuel was sent by God himself, because the message he delivered respected a future event. To foretel what is to happen belongs only to God. Isaiah xli. 21, 23; and xlii. 9.

There is nothing then, in either of the above cases, to invalidate the representation uniformly given in Scripture, of the full attestation that miracles afford of the immediate interposition of God. "Rabbi," said Nicodemus, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." To the miracles which he wrought, Jesus Christ again and again appealed, as full evidence of his Divine mission, while he declared those to be inex-



cusable who saw them, and yet did not believe him. "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake."

The general character of the miracles of the Old Testament is that of facts, plain, palpable, and not overpowering in their nature, at the same time inseparably connected with other facts and histories, and always immediately necessary to the occasion on which they were exhibited. The end they had in view was obvious, and in general previously and distinctly announced, and the attention of the beholder was calmly directed to their progressive, and often long protracted completion. The universal deluge, the confounding the language at Babel, and the destruction of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven, were visible and immediate interpositions of God for the punishment of wicked men, different from his usual mode of procedure in the government of the world. The design and tendency of these awful displays of Divine indignation, of the first



of which 120 years premonition was given, were of a public and permanent nature, peculiarly adapted to the state of the world, when the knowledge of God was transmitted by oral tradition. And it is remarkable, that visible and indelible monuments of the effects of them all remain to this day.

On the separation of Israel, as a nation, from the rest of mankind, a remarkable train of miracles, interwoven with their history and laws, commenced. In the wilderness, Moses beheld the burning bush, which was not consumed, and was enabled, with his rod, to work miracles, to convince both his countrymen and Pharaoh, that he was appointed the leader of the people of Israel. When the nation of Israel, under his guidance, at length went up out of Egypt, a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, went before their camp. When encompassed by the mountains on each side, and the army of the Egyptians behind them, the Red Sea, which was before them, divided at the stretching out of the rod of Moses, and opened to the whole multitude a safe passage, while the Egyptians, following them, were overwhelmed by its returning waters. On their way to the promised land, God led them “through that great and terrible wilder-



ness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water,"—"a land that was not sown,"—"a land of desarts and of pits, a land of drought and of the shadow of death, a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt." By the daily falling of manna, and by the supply of water that followed them, they were supported, during forty years, in a situation where, without a miracle, so great a multitude of people, (computed to have been at that time between two and three millions,) could not have subsisted forty days. And from their continuance in the wilderness, these prolonged miracles were not only evident to themselves, but likewise to all the surrounding nations.

Soon after they had left Egypt, the law was delivered to them from Mount Sinai. At the foot of the mountain, standing at a distance beyond the reach of any human voice, the whole people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of God delivering the ten commandments, accompanied with thunder and lightning from the midst of the fire and cloud, the tokens of the presence of God on the top of the mountain, which quaked. Of this appearance regular notice was given to them some time before. The



whole scene was so awful, that Moses trembled, and the people removed and stood afar off. The authority of Moses, afterwards employed as their lawgiver, was supported during their journey by miraculous appearances and events on every necessary occasion. When they came out of Egypt, there was not a feeble person among them, so that not one was left behind. And at the end of their journey, Moses, after 40 years, could appeal to them that their feet had not swelled, neither their raiment waxed old. When arrived at the borders of Canaan, and when a supply of food could be obtained in the usual manner, the manna ceased. A way was opened for them to pass through the river Jordan, as they had formerly passed through the Red Sea, of which permanent memorials were set up at the time in presence of the whole nation.

On the entrance of Israel into Canaan, in order to encourage them in the war in which they were about to engage, and to assure them of that Divine assistance which they should experience, the walls of the first city they invested fell down on the blowing of horns. In one of their great battles, the sun was stopped in his course for the space of a whole day, that they might be enabled to follow up their victory. Connected with all



their history, as an essential part of it, these visible miraculous interpositions were continued long after they came to be established in the land which God had given them as an inheritance. Miracles were likewise wrought among them in more private instances, as in some of those that were performed by their great Prophets Elijah and Elisha, the former of whom was, like Enoch, translated to heaven.

The whole train of miraculous interposition from the beginning, before there was any written revelation, materially contributed to maintain the knowledge and worship of God in the world. To Israel, as separated from the other nations, it was essential to the circumstances in which they were placed. Miracles were necessary to authenticate the Scriptures as the oracles of God, of which the Israelites were appointed the keepers. They were also necessary to preserve the nation in subjection to that burdensome ritual, which served at once to restrain from idolatry, and to shadow forth the good things to come. The spiritual import of their law they might not all comprehend; but it was indispensibly necessary that they all should be fully convinced, that the outward form which they received was from God. Without miraculous



interposition, the Israelites never would have continued in that seclusion they experienced, and in that separation from the idolatrous rites of other nations to which they had been accustomed, and to which, being so much suited to the depraved natural appetites of man, they were all along so prone to return. And unless they had been convinced, by a series of miracles, that Moses was a prophet sent from God, they would not have submitted to him as a leader, to whose authority, on various occasions, they so reluctantly yielded. Nothing, then, but that miraculous Providence under which they were placed, could have preserved them in obedience,—could have thoroughly subdued their incredulity, and impressed on their minds so strong a conviction of the truth of their dispensation, that all their subsequent trials and dispersions, and all their disappointments, occasioned by the erroneous opinions they have embraced, have not been able to efface it to this day. At length, when the purposes intended by miraculous interpositions were accomplished, they became gradually less frequent, till the spirit of prophecy was withdrawn, when they seem to have ceased altogether, not to appear again in Israel till they were renewed by the Messiah himself, in a way bet-



ter adapted to the genius of that more spiritual dispensation which he introduced, more illustrative of the beneficent nature of his divine mission, who came not to condemn the world, but to save it, but equally beyond the reach of human power to perform.



## CHAP. VIII.

*Types of the Old Testament.*

THE plan of preparation for the coming of the Messiah was carried on, not only by the dealings of God, first with individuals, and afterwards with the nation of Israel, detailed in their history, and by the miracles interwoven with it, but also by a series of typical or parabolical representations exhibited to the senses, whereby the work of redemption was prefigured and kept in view. A type is a pattern, model, or visible sign of another object, which it represents beforehand. A parable is either a feigned narration, for the purpose of conveying instruction, in which the truth or instruction is called the moral; or, in the sense in which we are now to consider it, it signifies information by an action which is made to represent something future.



It is not necessary, however, that every part or circumstance in the type or parable should have its corresponding circumstance or part in the moral or antetype. Some things may be necessarily introduced into either of the former, to make them complete, which are not material to the truth of what is signified. These methods of figurative instruction are still common all over the East.

From the beginning, this manner of representation by parables and types was employed, in the wisdom of God, for leading forward the attention of men to truths which were at first only partially revealed. This is analogous to the whole of the divine procedure, both in the creation and government of the world. Nothing is brought to maturity at once. As, therefore, in the natural world, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; so, in respect to spiritual things, God delivered his will by sundry portions, and in divers manners, to the fathers by the prophets, before, in the last days, he "spake by his Son."

Besides a literal and plain meaning, the Jews acknowledged that there was also a spiritual sense in the Scriptures. It was, accordingly, a constant and received opinion among them, that



all things in the law of Moses had a mystical or secret meaning. In the New Testament this meaning is fully unfolded, and the typical import of the Jewish economy recognised. "All these things," says Paul, speaking of Israel after the flesh, "happened to them for examples, (literally, *types*), and *are written for our admonition*." To this mode of figurative instruction the Jews were accustomed, by the typical actions often performed by the prophets, which represented beforehand certain events in their history. These, being regularly verified, were calculated to produce the strongest confidence in the future accomplishment of whatever was yet only shadowed forth.

INSTITUTIONS OF WORSHIP, PERSONS, PLACES, EVENTS, and almost all things under the Old Testament dispensation, were employed to give typical signs of the Messiah, of his kingdom, and salvation. The creation of the heavens and the earth, and the institution of the seventh day Sabbath, when God rested from his works, as well as the entrance of Israel into the rest of Canaan, were employed by him to whom all his works are known from the beginning of the world, as representations before hand of the new and spiritual creation, and of the rest into which Jesus



Christ entered, when, having finished the work of redemption, he arose from the grave ; as also of that eternal rest which all his people shall enjoy, in those new heavens and that new earth which he creates.

SACRIFICE, appointed from the beginning, and continued till, by the sacrifice of himself, the Messiah put away sin, was the chief of the instituted types. Animals that were accounted clean, and fit for human food, being devoted to God, were slain upon an altar, to make atonement for sin. To consider this service as possessing any importance in itself, otherwise than as a figurative sign, would be giving it a place to which it cannot, on any rational ground, be entitled. "Atonement comprehends the satisfying of divine justice, procuring remission of sin, access to God, and acceptance with him ; deliverance from death, and all other miseries that are the fruits of sin. To ascribe such effects any otherwise than typically to the sacrificing of animals, is to ascribe effects of the greatest importance, to causes that bear no manner of proportion to them. The shedding of the blood of beasts is no more than what is done daily, for no higher end than subsistence to the body, and bears no proportion to expiation for the sin of the soul."



The blood of animals man had no right to shed at all, unless permission had been given to him by God himself, to whom these animals and their lives belong. The offerer was therefore presenting to God only what was his own; and it could not be conceived that there was any inherent efficacy in what was thus offered, to remove guilt. But when viewed in its proper light of emblematical signification, the slaying of an animal devoted to God, over which the offerer confessed his sins, thus laying them upon it, and putting it to death as loaded with guilt, was calculated to impress, in the strongest manner, the conviction that death was the consequence of sin; that the life of the offerer was forfeited by it, of which this action was a solemn acknowledgment, but that God would graciously accept a substitution. Thus it led forward the view of the worshipper to a method of delivery to be provided—to a sacrifice of intrinsic value, every way efficacious and well-pleasing to God.

This institution of sacrifice having been appointed from the first entrance of sin, the remembrance of it was preserved, and handed down by every nation in the world; and no one, however barbarous, has been found without it. At the same time, the knowledge of the distinct purpose



for which sacrifice had been originally instituted, was lost among all the nations but the Jews. None of them could say how it came to be attended to by them. By this means, however, all nations had their minds possessed with a belief, that atonement was necessary, and that repentance was not capable of expiating guilt. That the whole world should have agreed in a religious service, so remarkable in itself, and which what is called the light of nature could never have taught to be acceptable to God, is an indubitable proof of the truth of the original relation given to man, and that the whole human race is of one descent.

The skins with which God clothed our first parents, immediately after the intimation of deliverance by the seed of the woman, appear to have belonged to animals slain in sacrifice. The grant to man of animal food had not then been made, and of the instituted mode of worship by sacrifice, we have soon after, in the case of Cain and Abel, the fullest confirmation. Thus, both in the sacrifice and the covering provided for them, our first parents, in addition to the promise they had just heard, received an emblematical representation that God, providing an atonement for their guilt in the way of substitution,



would finally rescue them in soul and body, from that naked and helpless condition, to which, by disobedience, they had reduced themselves.

In the histories of Abel, of Noah, of Abraham, and of all the servants of God, of whom a particular account is given, we find the institution of sacrifice solemnly observed; and it afterwards formed a prominent and daily part of the religious services of the nation of Israel.

When that decisive miracle of slaying all the first-born in Egypt was wrought, which triumphed over the obstinacy of Pharaoh, and induced him to allow the people of Israel to depart, the feast of the passover was instituted. Every family of Israel was commanded to kill a lamb, but a bone of him was not to be broken. It was to be a lamb of the first year, without blemish, to be roasted with fire, on which they were to feast, and they were to strike the blood on the side posts and lintels of their doors. Under the protection of this blood, the families of Israel were safe; the destroying angel, who in that night slew all the first-born among the Egyptians, being commanded to pass over those houses, on the doors of which it was sprinkled. This was to be a standing ordinance in Israel, to be observed yearly in all their generations. It was a memo-



rial, as they were to inform their children of that deliverance which they experienced, in coming out of Egypt. But by this deliverance from temporal death, and temporal bondage, was strikingly prefigured the liberation of the soul from the bondage of Satan, and from the dominion of sin and death, by the blood of Jesus Christ, who is so often compared to a lamb without spot or blemish, and who, at the feast of the passover, about 1500 years after its institution, was offered as the true paschal lamb, a sacrifice for sin. When this took place, the observance of the passover was abolished—the veil of the temporal deliverance was removed—and his disciples were afterwards to take the emblems of the body and blood of Christ, “who is our passover, sacrificed for us,” and eating and drinking in remembrance of him, to feast upon them in the presence of God.

When all the miracles which Moses was enabled to perform before Pharaoh had failed of success, the slaying of the paschal lamb, and the exhibition of its sprinkled blood, that illustrious type of the great atonement, was the signal of the departure of the Israelites out of the house of bondage, and of the destruction of their enemies, whom after a little they were to see no more.



The feast of "first fruits" was appointed to succeed the passover. The commencement of the harvest, which, in such a climate as the Israelites enjoyed, would be very uniform, was on the day after the passover. The people then presented a sheaf or an omer, containing an offering of the first fruits of the harvest; and till this was done, they were not to taste any part of the produce of the year. They were then to count seven Sabbaths from the day they presented the sheaf; and on the morrow after the last of these Sabbaths, the fiftieth day, they were to abstain from work, to keep a religious assembly, and to present two loaves of fine flour *leavened*, as for food, not for sacrifice. These being the produce of the harvest, now fully prepared for use, were also called the first fruits unto the Lord. The whole of this service was a typical representation of good things to come; the *letter* which shadowed forth the *spirit*.

On the second day of the feast of the passover, Jesus Christ was crucified. On the morning after the third day of the passover, the first day of the harvest, and of presenting the sheaf of first fruits, he rose from the grave, "being the first fruits of them that slept." But till af-



ter he had completed all he was to do on earth, and had ascended to the Father, in consequence of which the Holy Spirit was sent forth, the fruit of the spiritual harvest was not fully prepared for use. The Apostles, therefore, during this interval, were to remain silent ; but on the 50th day, when the people of Israel were again assembled at the feast of Pentecost, to present the two loaves now to be used by them as *food*, the Holy Ghost was given, and then the bread of life being fully prepared, the Apostles immediately began to minister the Gospel of God.

It is further to be remarked, that the resurrection of the Messiah, which completed the deliverance of believers from the bondage of sin, and will finally release them from the power of death, took place in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of Egypt. For the Israelites went out of Egypt, and Christ was crucified on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan. And the descent of the Holy Ghost appears to have taken place on the same day on which the law was given to Israel, being fifty days after their departure from Egypt. The one was the giving of the letter written on the tables of



stone, the other of the Spirit, written on the tables of the heart.

It is also to be observed, that Christ rose from the grave on the *eighth* day, being the first day of the week, the day after the Sabbath, which was the seventh from the creation. On this day Jesus has recorded his name, calling it the "Lord's day," and has thus appropriated it in a peculiar manner to himself. From different intimations, both before and after the flood, the institution of the seventh day Sabbath appears to have been observed from the beginning. At the giving of the law to Israel, they were commanded to *remember* the Sabbath day. This injunction is inserted among the ten commandments, which were pronounced by the voice of God himself, and not delivered through Moses, as the other parts of the law to that nation were. These commandments were of universal obligation, equally binding on all mankind, although then enforced on Israel by peculiar motives and sanctions. And now it is only the day, not the portion of time to be observed to the Lord, that is changed by Him who is "Lord even of the Sabbath:" For under the new dispensation, one day in seven, although a different day, is in like manner to be sanctified.



The seventh day was the *Sabbath of the Lord*, on which, when God had finished creation, he rested from his work, and on that account blessed and sanctified it, and *therefore* no work was to be done by his people on that day. The same reasons now hold good for abstaining from work on the first day of the week. It is *the day of the Lord*, in which having finished redemption, he entered into his rest.

This day Jesus honoured by different appearances to his disciples, who, as it is expressly noticed, were assembled on it. It was also the day on which the Holy Spirit was poured out, when the disciples, as usual, were again met together. It was the day on which they afterwards statedly met to break bread. God blessed "the Sabbath of the Lord." And a peculiar blessing may be expected by those who observe the "Lord's day."—"In all places," said God, "where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." Jesus has recorded his name this day.

Under the Mosaic economy, however, an additional strictness appears to have been superadded to the observance of the Sabbath day, (not as given among the ten commandments, but as afterwards enforced upon Israel,) and therefore is



not to be extended beyond that dispensation. Allowance for the difference of freedom under the Gospel, when believers are no longer “under tutors and governors,” \* seems, from different intimations, to have been intended, and in some respects to be necessary. But still the obligation to sanctify a seventh part of time, remains in force. Jesus declares that “the Sabbath was made for man,” which shews that it was necessary for him, under *every* dispensation, not only since, but even before the fall.

That the obligation to sanctify a seventh day was not intended to be superceded, by what the Apostles say respecting the observance of particular days, is clear. For the Apostle Paul, who so earnestly warned the churches of Galatia against the evil of observing days, as commanded under the Jewish dispensation, enjoined on these very churches the duty of making their collections for the poor “on the first day of the week.” Thus he shewed that he did not refer to

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\* “The law,” says Paul, “was a schoolmaster, (literally a pedagogue,) until Christ.” A pedagogue was a slave who attended children, led them about in his hand, and taught them to walk.



it, when he found fault with their distinguishing certain other days.

The observance of this institution is enjoined on Christians in the New Testament, in the same manner as that of other institutions; for instance, of their uniting together in churches. Some who admit, that, on account of the recorded example of the Apostles and first churches under their guidance, they are bound to assemble on the first day of the week, contend, that they are not required to observe the whole day as a sacred rest, but only that part of it during which they are assembled. But this distinction is not warranted by the word of God. The Scriptures of the New Testament do not give an account of what the disciples did when they entered into their closets and shut their doors. We cannot then expect any detail of the manner in which they individually spent in private that part of the day, when not assembled together. But we are not therefore left without a rule in this matter.

The first day of the week is called the "Lord's day." It is not a part of the day that goes by this name, but the whole of it. It is therefore *His* day, and not our day; just as the expression, "the Lord's Supper," denotes that this is His



supper, and not our supper. The Apostle Paul, accordingly, makes this distinction between the Lord's Supper and our "own supper." Whenever, too, we read in Scripture of days being observed to the Lord, we understand this, not of a part, but of the whole of those days, although only the public services are noticed.

The institution of the seventh day of rest, thus perpetuated, should be regarded with gratitude, not only for the opportunity of spiritual edification it affords, but as a mitigation of that sentence by which man is doomed to eat his bread in the sweat of his face. And it deserves to be remarked, that, so far from the food of man being diminished by thus abstaining from labour during a seventh part of his time, food is most abundant and certain in those countries where this institution is observed.

As every thing belonging to the new dispensation was prefigured and shadowed forth under the old; so we shall find, that different typical intimations were given of this change of the day of weekly rest. The *eighth* day is particularly distinguished throughout the Old Testament. Circumcision was to be administered to children on the eighth day. The first born of cattle which belonged to the Lord, were not to be re-



ceived till the eighth day of their age. On the eighth day, but not before, they were *accepted in sacrifice*. On the eighth day, the consecration of Aaron and his sons was completed, and he *entered on his office as priest*. The *cleansing* of the leprosy, which was typical of cleansing from sin, took place, after various ceremonies, on the eighth day. The same was the case as to those who had issues, and also respecting the cleansing of the Nazarites. On the feast of tabernacles, the *eighth* day was a Sabbath, and was called the great day of the feast. On the first day of this feast, thirteen bullocks were offered; on the other six days, the number of bullocks was decreased by one each day; so that, on the seventh day, there were only seven bullocks offered. But, on the *eighth* day, the number was reduced to *one* bullock, after which these sacrifices were *ended*. At the dedication of the temple, when it was completed or *perfected*, the ark of the covenant being placed in it, Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him; and, on the *eighth* day, they made a solemn assembly. Ezekiel, in his vision of the city and temple and land, towards the end of his prophecies, says, "Seven days shall they purge the altar, and purify it,



and they shall consecrate themselves ; and when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the *eighth* day, and so forward, the priest shall make your offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings, and I will accept you, saith the Lord." Now, let the correspondence of the *spirit* with the *letter* be observed.

On the eighth day, when Jesus rose from the dead, those who were dead in their sins, and the *uncircumcision* of their flesh, were quickened together with him in whom they are circumcised. On that day he was received as the *first born* from the dead. On the eighth day he was *accepted as a sacrifice*. On the eighth day, when he was "consecrated for ever more," *he entered on his office as a priest*; for while he was on earth he was not a priest. On the eighth day he *cleansed* his people from sin. On the eighth day, having by *one* sacrifice for ever perfected those that are sanctified, he made *an end* of sin-offering. On the eighth day, the temple of his body being raised up, and *perfected* through sufferings, his disciples, on that day, hold solemn assemblies. And upon the eighth day, and so forward, he, as that priest who having consecrated himself for evermore, entered into the holiest of all, and who "ever liveth to make intercession"



for his people, stands at the altar, as the Apostle John beheld him, having a golden censer with much incense, which he offers with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne.

On the altars of Israel, the sacrifices were doubled on the Sabbath day. Christians, whether they eat or drink, are to do all to the glory of God. Still there are seasons when their intercourse with God is more immediate, and their service to him more like the service of heaven. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God."—"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground."

As Christ, the "first fruits of them that slept," is risen from the dead, so all his people shall also rise at his coming. No figure of this resurrection can be more striking than the harvest of grain, which, buried for a season under ground, at length revives and springs up. This emblem of a burial and resurrection we witness every year; and the man who seeing it, doubts the *possibility* of the resurrection of the body from the grave, may, as the Apostle Paul denominates him, be reckoned a fool.

Many distinguished PERSONS were, from the



beginning, held forth in their histories and offices, as types of Christ.

ADAM, as the head and representative of all who derive their natural life from him, was the "figure of *Him* who was to come," who is the head and representative of all who derive from him their spiritual life.

The death of ABEL, by the seed of the serpent, and the translation of ENOCH, were types of Jesus Christ, in his death which he suffered from the hands of wicked men, and in his ascension to heaven.

NOAH, a preacher of righteousness, whose name signifies "rest," "preparing an ark to the saving of his house," himself saved by the waters of the flood, as the believer is saved by baptism; and the ark, which was the refuge of all who entered it, from that flood in which the ungodly world perished, were in various ways emblematical representations of the person and salvation of the Redeemer.

MELCHISEDEC, King of Salem, which is King of Peace, and whose name signifies "King of righteousness," was also priest of the most high God, and is the first in Scripture who is called a priest. He was an early and very remarkable type of Jesus Christ, both in his priestly and kingly of-



fice. In the 110th Psalm, where David is addressing the Messiah, he says, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." The priesthood of the tribe of Levi was an eminent type of the priesthood of the Messiah. But as it was at length to be superseded, it could not represent his priesthood in respect of duration; and probably to signify its limited period, besides other reasons, an accurate genealogy was indispensable to it. But the genealogy, the birth, and the death of Melchisedec, are all omitted, in order that, appearing in the history without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of years, he might more completely represent *Him* who is from eternity, and of whose priesthood and government there shall be no end. The circumstance that the Levitical priesthood should be set aside, which, as it was of divine appointment, was essential to the instalment of the Messiah in his office, was thus early intimated in the case of Melchisedec. While the circumstance that the order of Melchisedec's priesthood should be permanent, was plainly declared, as above, by David, king of Israel, at a time when the priesthood of the tribe of Levi subsisted in all its dignity. Another thing also was provided for in the history of Melchisedec. His



priesthood was to be exhibited as superior to that of the tribe of Levi, and to him therefore, even Levi paid tithes in the person of his great progenitor, who as the less was blessed by Melchisedec. To Abraham also and his followers, this priest of the most high God brought forth bread and wine, which, as the emblems of that spiritual food, provided for the life of the world, are now permanently appointed to nourish and refresh his followers, by the true King and High Priest of their profession. Melchisedec being a priest of the Gentiles, intimated that the priesthood of Messiah should not be confined to the nation of Israel, as that of Levi was.

ABRAHAM, “the friend of God,” “the father of the faithful,” and “the heir of the world,” called out of his own country, sojourning in a strange land, confessing that he was a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him in the same promise, looking for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, desiring a better, that is an heavenly country, appears to have been not only the progenitor, but a type of *Him* in whom God “delighteth,” “the father of the everlasting age,” to whom belong the “uttermost parts of the earth as his possession,” who



“came down from heaven,” whose “days on earth were like a shadow,” who was “a stranger to his brethren, and an alien to his mother’s children,” who, without any certain habitation, travelled about with those who were joint heirs with him, being the children whom God had given him, and who constantly looked to the New Jerusalem, and that heavenly world to which he was about to return.

The offering up of ISAAC on Mount Moriah, the only begotten son of Abraham, the child of promise, born out of the usual course of nature, his carrying the wood necessary for the offering, his voluntarily allowing himself to be bound and laid on the altar as a victim, and Abraham’s receiving him back from the dead, “in a figure,” (literally, a *parable*,) was a striking representation of the sacrifice and resurrection of the Messiah, exhibiting to Abraham “the day of Christ.” In the same place, about 2000 years afterwards, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, early promised, and born of a virgin out of the usual course of nature, carried his cross, voluntarily yielded himself as a victim to death, and soon afterwards revived from the dead.

When JACOB was sent out from his father Isaac, and was sleeping in a solitary place by



night, he was favoured with a remarkable vision, which significantly denoted that communication by the Mediator, which is opened between heaven and earth. Gen. xxviii. 12, 13, "He dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." Jesus applies this emblematical representation to himself, when he says, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" As Jacob saw the Lord standing in heaven at the top of this ladder, so Stephen, the first martyr, immediately before he committed his soul to Jesus, and fell asleep, said, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

JOSEPH, called "the shepherd, the stone of Israel," the beloved son of his father, hated of his brethren, sold by them, according to the proposal of Judah, or Judas, for a small price to Egypt, cast into prison, coming out thence, made ruler over the whole country, saving the



lives of his brethren, by providing food on their journey, and bringing them into that fertile land, there to be fed by him, and to partake in his prosperity and glory, was a remarkable type of *Him* who is the true Shepherd of Israel, and the chief corner stone, the beloved Son of God, who was hated of his own people, endured the greatest indignity, was sold by Judas for a small price, laid in the grave, raised out of it, and exalted to power. He gives bread from heaven to those "whom he is not ashamed to call his brethren;" conducts and provides for them on their journey thither; and finally brings them to that country where he has prepared a place for them, where he feeds them for ever, and makes them partakers of his exaltation and glory.

MOSES at his birth, was saved from the general slaughter of the infants of the Israelites which took place by a tyrant's command, and was afterwards compelled to flee into a foreign country to save his life. Moses, accredited by the signs and miracles which he was enabled to perform—the meekest of men—and the most distinguished prophet, whom the Lord knew face to face, was the *deliverer* of his people from Egyptian bondage. He was the *lawgiver* of Israel. He was their *leader* in their journey through the wilder-



ness to the promised land; and above all, the *mediator* of that covenant which God made with them. When receiving the law, he fasted forty days and forty nights; and when he descended from the mountain, his face shone with the reflected glory of God. In these, and in many other respects, Moses resembled and prefigured Jesus Christ, with whom also his parents were compelled to flee into a foreign land, to escape from a tyrant's slaughter of the infants in the place where he was born; who was meek and lowly, but approved by signs and miracles which God did by him. He is the great *deliverer* of his people from the bondage of sin and Satan. He is their *lawgiver*. The *mediator* of the new covenant made with the house of Israel. The *leader* and captain of their salvation, leading them through the wilderness of this world, in which they are pilgrims and strangers, to the promised land of rest, which Canaan prefigured. In entering upon his work, he fasted forty days and forty nights. When he was on the holy mount, "his face did shine as the sun." Jesus Christ was that *prophet* whom Moses foretold God was to raise up like unto him. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were spoken after, but Christ as a son over his own



house." "Let us search," says one, "all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a man who was so like to Moses as Christ, or so like to Christ as Moses. If we cannot find such an one, then we have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God."

One thing further respecting Moses may be remarked: On account of his sinning against God, he was not permitted to enter the promised land, of which he was exceedingly desirous, and he earnestly besought the Lord on this account. The sentence, however, remained unchanged, and he was commanded to say no more on that matter. It was necessary that his death, as the mediator of that first covenant, should intervene before Israel could enter the land of promise, otherwise an important part of the typical resemblance betwixt him and the Lord Jesus, as the mediator of the new covenant, could not have been exhibited. Through sin Moses forfeited this privilege; and, on account of sin, the death of their mediator is necessary, in order that the people of God may be put in possession of their eternal inheritance. From this part of the history of Moses, Christians may derive a very useful lesson respecting the refusal of God



to comply with his earnest prayer on this subject. In reference to spiritual things, they cannot be too importunate. It is the will of God, even their sanctification, and in this respect they may ask what they will and it shall be done unto them. But as to temporal matters, they are very bad judges of what is best for them. And were many of their petitions on that head to be granted, it would prove their ruin, or the granting them would be contrary to some of the great but unknown purposes of God. Moses, although he wrote of Christ, was not fully aware of the correspondence, in all its circumstances, of the part he was acting with the history of the Messiah, which was intended "for a testimony to the things which were to be spoken after," otherwise he would not have urged this request as he did.

Not any one person, however, could furnish a complete representation of Jesus Christ. Many, perhaps all of those who during the Old Testament dispensation "obtained a good report through faith," in one way or other prefigured him. In all of them, there were points of resemblance; but still, like the law, they were only the shadow, and not the very image of him that was to come. Moses, though the leader of Israel



through the wilderness, did not conduct them into the promised land. That honour was reserved for Joshua his successor, who was descended from Joseph.

JOSHUA is the first of the typical persons who bore the name of the Messiah, Joshua and Jesus being one name in the original languages. This name, which imports Jehovah the Saviour, was not his original name, but was given to him by Moses. Joshua conducted the people of Israel through the divided stream of Jordan safely into the promised land; conquered their enemies, and settled them there in peace; in all which, he was a type of the "Captain of Salvation,"—"the Captain of the host of the Lord," in which character Jesus appeared to Joshua.

JONAH was a type of Jesus Christ. When the Scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign, he referred them to the sign of Jonah, saying, "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jonah, the first prophet we read of who was sent to reform a Gentile nation, received a commission from God to go to the city of Nineveh. Being averse to execute so dangerous and difficult a service, he endeavoured to make his



escape, embarking in a ship bound to Tarshish. A dreadful tempest however arose, and Jonah voluntarily counselled the mariners to cast him into the sea. They endeavoured for a while, in spite of the tempest, to make for the shore, but in vain. They therefore cast him into the deep, and immediately the storm and the raging of the sea ceased. A fish prepared by God swallowed up Jonah, at whose command it again vomited him out alive upon the dry land on the third day, after which he fulfilled his commission, and preached with success to Nineveh, whither he had been sent. The sin and reluctance of the prophet, necessary to produce the sign, are entirely inapplicable *personally* to his great antitype; and were these to make it void, there could not be a type of the Redeemer found in this sinful world. Atonement must be made for even the altars of Israel, as well as for the priest the offerer, before they could be used for religious services. But his commission not being executed but through death, which is the effect of sin; the consequent immediate appeasing of the tempest; the deliverance from the bottom of the deep on the third day, and the successful accomplishment of the ministry he had received, strikingly represented *Him* in whose name the Psalmist says,



“ All thy billows have gone over me, I sink in deep waters ;” and who, going up to Jerusalem before his death, compared his sufferings to an immersion in water, saying, “ I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished ;” who died and was buried, but saw no corruption ; and who having satisfied justice, and having borne the effect and appeased the storm of God’s righteous displeasure, rose again on the third day to preach salvation, and successfully to accomplish the end for which he was sent.

The PROPHETS, who were raised up from time to time, each in their office represented, as they all gave witness to, Jesus Christ, “ who was a Prophet mighty in deed and in word before God and all the people.”

The HIGH PRIEST, who was the chief man in Israel, who appeared before God for the people in their sacred services, and who was appointed for *sacrifice*, for *blessing*, and for *intercession*, typified that great High Priest who offered himself a sacrifice for sin, who blesses his people, and who evermore liveth to make intercession for them.

The KINGS of Israel, in their government, especially David, both in his affliction and in his



prosperity, who was born in the same city, and of whom, "as concerning the flesh, Christ came," typified the King of Zion, who is "the King of kings." Thus, the kings, the priests, and the prophets of Israel, all of them, both collectively and individually, represented Jesus Christ, the true Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, and were *anointed* to their respective offices, in order that they might more strikingly shadow forth the *Messiah*, which is, being interpreted, the Christ, that is, the *Anointed*; he being "anointed of God with the Holy Ghost, and with power."

PLACES were also accommodated to represent Christ and his salvation. Of these, the Wilderness through which Israel passed, the Land of Canaan, the Cities of refuge, the city of Jerusalem, and the Tabernacle and the Temple, were among the most distinguished.

The WILDERNESS, barren and desolate, producing no food for man, but inhabited by noxious animals, without any road or sign of direction through it, aptly represented the state to which this world, now become the kingdom of Satan, the very ground of which is cursed, is reduced to the believer. It is a world through which he must pass on his journey to his Father's house; but innumerable are the difficulties by



the way. Of any thing spiritually good, it is in itself utterly barren and destitute. All spiritual food, as well as all direction and assistance for travelling along, must be supplied from above, while snares and enemies beset his path.

On account of the sins of the people of Israel while in the wilderness, the Lord had sent serpents, which bit them, and many in consequence died. As a remedy for this evil, Moses was directed to make a serpent of brass, and to put it upon a pole. Any one who had been bitten, when he looked upon this serpent, lived. Nothing could more aptly exhibit the deadly nature of sin, the manner of its removal by the sovereign efficacy of the atonement of the Messiah, and the method of obtaining an interest in it. "*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.*" Nor could a fitter emblem than a brazen serpent, the innoxious likeness of that animal, be imagined, to represent him, who, although he knew no sin, appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Well may human nature be thus represented, since the deadly poison of the serpent, infused at first into the mind of him who was the root of the human race, has infected every branch, through which death has come upon all



men. In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus expressly applied to himself this remarkable type: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The LAND OF CANAAN was a type of the heavenly country. It was the inheritance given to Abraham by promise to himself and his posterity. As his descendants after the flesh inherited the one; so his spiritual seed shall inherit the other. Canaan was the land of rest, after the toils and dangers of the wilderness. To make it a fit inheritance, and an emblem of that inheritance "which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away," it was cleared of the ungodly inhabitants. No spot could have been selected as so fit a representation of that better country. It is called in Scripture "the pleasant land,"—"the glory of all lands,"—"a land flowing with milk and honey."—"A sight of this territory," says a late traveller, "can alone convey any adequate idea of its surprising produce. It is truly the Eden of the East, rejoicing in the abundance of its wealth. Under a wise and beneficent government, the produce of the Holy Land would exceed all calculation.



Its perennial harvest ; the salubrity of its air ; its limpid springs, its rivers, lakes, and matchless plains ; its hills and vales ; all these, added to the serenity of its climate, prove this land to be indeed ' a field which the Lord hath blessed.' God hath given it of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine."

CITIES OF REFUGE were appointed for the people of Israel. To impress on their minds the greater abhorrence of the sin of murder, the nearest of kin was permitted to put to death the man who, even without design, had killed his neighbour. But to these cities of refuge he might flee for safety. Roads to them of great breadth, and bridges where necessary, were provided ; and inscriptions were set up, to direct him who fled. When arrived in one of them, he found the necessary accommodation, and his life was again safe under protection of the laws. There he was to remain till the death of the High Priest, after which he was to return into the land of his possession. We have here an apt representation of the safety of the believer who has " fled for refuge to the hope set before him." The high way is prepared, and abundant direction provided for him ; and, through the death of the great High Priest, he will at length be released



from all confinement and bondage. Speaking of the days of the Gospel, Isaiah says, "And a high way shall be there, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

The city of JERUSALEM was taken possession of by David. On the hill of Zion was the residence of the kings of Israel, and the place where the temple stood. Jerusalem was the capital of Judea, where the worship of God was established, and where all the nation of Israel assembled at their solemn feasts. "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." Jerusalem was a type of "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" that city in the heavenly country for which Abraham looked, "which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God,"—of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," which John saw descending out of heaven from God, "having the glory of God."—"And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.\* And the city

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\* "I and my Father are one."



had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it ; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." \*

The TABERNACLE, and afterwards the TEMPLE at Jerusalem, were remarkable types of Jesus Christ. Both were erected according to EXACT PATTERNS ; the first given to Moses, the last to David. There may be parts of them which, like certain circumstances in a parable, are only necessary to complete the figure, and not essential to the moral. But as a whole, and also in many, if not all, of their minute parts, they were striking representations of Jesus Christ and his salvation.

Alluding to the temple, and applying the figure to himself, Jesus said of his own body, " Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days." It is only through him as the Mediator, who is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*, that sinners have access to God. Accordingly the temple, in which the cloud, the symbol of the Divine presence, over the mercy-seat, appeared, was a figure of him that was to come, God manifest in the flesh, and who as such was appointed to be the *medium* of communication with God. In it the priests

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\* " My glory will I not give to another."



were to officiate, the sacrifices to be offered, and the worship of God to be performed according to the order prescribed. Since the destruction of that temple, all these services have become legally impracticable.

When at a distance from the temple, the Israelite was to have respect to it, in drawing near to God, lifting up his hands toward the "holy oracle." At its dedication, Solomon prayed that if the people should worship the Lord toward this house, God would hear them in heaven. Accordingly Daniel, in a distant country, prayed, "his window being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem." Jonah calling upon God from the belly of the fish, says, "I will look again toward thy holy temple." "If," says Jehoshaphat, "when evil cometh upon us as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help."

Every thing within the temple, and connected with its service, typified the great Redeemer and his salvation. Within the second veil stood the ark of the covenant, which contained the two tables of the law, over which was the propitiatory or mercy-seat, of pure gold. The whole of this was a figurative representation. The sanc-



tuary was a figure of the true holy place, and the high priest alone being allowed to enter it only once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and the errors of the people, denoted that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. The propitiatory or mercy seat, covering the ark and the tables of the law, signified Christ interposing betwixt his people and the condemning law, and covering their sins. "Blessed is he whose sin is covered." From the mercy-seat, as a throne of grace, God gave gracious answers to his people, shewing that as sin, and the breaking of his holy law, was the cause of distance and separation from God, so through Christ, the true propitiatory, by whom the honours of the broken law are restored and maintained, intercourse is again established. The high priest was to enter through the veil into the holiest of all, and to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice towards the mercy-seat, with the names of the tribes of Israel on his breastplate. He was also to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices on the people, and they were to lay their hands on the sacrifices that were offered up for them.

On the day of expiation, the high priest was to put on the garments appropriated for that service, and to be used only in these services which were performed within the second veil. He was



to make an expiation for himself and his house, by offering a young bullock, and to take two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, procured at the common expence of all. These goats were to be presented to God at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and lots were to be cast upon both of them. The one goat was to be offered in sacrifice; but the high priest, laying both his hands on the head of the other, confessed over it the sins of the children of Israel. Thus all their sins being laid on the goat, he was sent away into the wilderness into a land not inhabited. All this, with the other services appointed, was typical of the atonement made by the Redeemer, "who taketh away the sin of the world,"—by means of which "when the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none, and the sins of Judah and they shall not be found."

The whole of the Levitical law, by its various ritual disqualifications, by its purifications, and its many diversified typical institutions, taught on the one hand the dreadful and contaminating nature of sin, and that fallen man has no access immediately, or without the interposition of the Mediator, and his atonement—to that holy God, before whom the angels in hea-



ven veil their faces. And it declared, on the other hand, that through this interposition, reconciliation was at length to be made, and that the throne of God, as a throne of grace and mercy, was accessible to sinners.

The example of the signal punishment of the people of Bethshemesh, for daring to look into the ark on the tables of the law, with the covering of the propitiatory or mercy-seat removed, awfully displayed the necessity of the great propitiation, and the heavy curse of the broken law, which will fall on all those “who, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Who, unacquainted with the extent and perfection of his holy law, venture to approach to God in their own supposed rectitude, and to stand the test of that law without a covering or propitiation, and who, above all, reject and remove from them that propitiation which God has provided.

The most striking display of all the typical representations, is given in the KINGDOM OF ISRAEL as a whole. The people of Israel, being chosen of God, embodied as a nation—the law which they received, and their various religious and political institutions, with the administrators of



them—their departure from Egypt, their journeyings, the events which occurred in their progress, and their settlement at last in the promised land, form, when all is taken together, a most wonderful and impressive exhibition of the kingdom of Christ, and the good things which were to come.

God had made a covenant with Abraham, by which he engaged, that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. In other words, that he should be the progenitor of the promised seed of the woman; the great Messiah, who was to confer on fallen man those spiritual blessings "which, according to the eternal purpose, God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." But as suitable preparations were to be made for ushering into the world this glorious king, God also engaged to confer great temporal blessings on Abraham. He was to be the father of many nations, and kings were to spring from him; which was to be fulfilled both in a literal and a spiritual sense. This covenant, then, with Abraham included and respected two future covenants, afterwards to be made, through which distinct blessings were to be severally secured and conveyed. The first of these covenants was to be subservient and introductory to the second, which was the grand ob-



ject contemplated. Accordingly, when the descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac were increased to a great multitude, God made with them at Sinai that first covenant, which had various ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary, which shadowed forth that second and better covenant, established upon better promises.

When Paul contrasts the ministry or service committed to Moses, with the service committed to the Apostles, he calls the first covenant the *letter*, and the second the *spirit*. But this *letter*, or outward form, in which spiritual blessings were veiled under sensible images and carnal ordinances, was useful and necessary in itself while it remained in force. Every part of this service regulated the conduct of the people of Israel, and reminded them of their natural ignorance, their depravity, and their dependence on God, and of their need of his unmerited favour and mercy to pardon their multiplied sins. At the same time it was calculated to lead forward their minds to that new and more spiritual dispensation, to which, on the appearance of another prophet like unto Moses, they were taught to look. In the mean time, this covenant bore visible marks of imperfection. Something, as far as it was con-



cerned, was still wanting. There was a manifest imperfection in the sacrifices which were offered, and a striking disproportion between the efficacy of the blood of bulls and of goats, and the malignity of those transgressions on account of which it was shed; while the repetition of the same sacrifices every year, and the infirmity of those priests who presented them, plainly intimated that guilt was not removed. But in this constant representation of its removal, a pledge was given of what was at length to be effectual.

Such a typical representation as that first covenant exhibited, was well adapted to the state of the world before the appearance of the Messiah, "when the day broke and the shadows fled away." Its ordinances, called "the rudiments of the world," which, if ultimately rested in, conducted only to death, were indeed "weak and beggarly elements," inasmuch as they could only "sanctify to the purifying of the flesh," and as no spiritual benefit could be derived from them, except in as far as they were typically understood. But in this way they proved effectual to the salvation of many; and they were the means of maintaining the knowledge and worship of the true God, in the midst of an apostate and idolatrous world, as well as of preparing the way for



the Messiah. They operated as a bound hedge around the nation of Israel—a barrier against that flood of iniquity which had overwhelmed every other nation on earth, and against which, owing to man's proneness to transgress, the spiritual light vouchsafed till the coming of the Messiah, and transmitted by oral tradition, could not have availed. "The law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." In Christ the veil was done away. The spirit was then made manifest, and the former dispensation, which, every way suitable to existing circumstances, was glorious in itself, had now no glory, by reason of that better hope which excelleth, to the introduction and confirmation of the truth of which it had, however, been mainly conducive, and the nature of which it continues to this hour to illustrate.

The nation of Israel, then, after the flesh, chosen of God, and separated from all the rest of the world, shadowed forth in its many institutions and privileges, the person, offices, and sacrifice of the Redeemer. And it represented that nation of Israel after the Spirit, with its ultimate inheritance in a future state—that nation which was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, consisting of believers who



are the subjects of Messiah's kingdom, which he has set up, while all the rest of the world, whether called Christians, Mahometans, Pagans, or by whatever other name, belong to the kingdom of Satan, the god of this world, and are his bond slaves. Jesus brings forth his people as he brought forth Israel of old out of this house of bondage. They are baptized unto his name, as that typical nation was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They are called to commemorate their spiritual deliverance from bondage as Israel was commanded to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt, and to believe in the promises of God respecting the heavenly Canaan, of which the earthly Canaan was a type. He makes with them a new covenant, of which he himself is the surety and mediator. He gives them a law by which they are to conduct themselves, and institutions of worship. He guides them through this wilderness by his word and spirit, as he directed Israel after the flesh by the pillar of fire and cloud. He supplies them with food during their pilgrimage, giving them spiritually to eat his flesh and drink his blood, of which the manna and the rock that was smitten were types. He heals their wounds which they receive from sin and Satan, whom he will bruise under their feet



shortly. He makes them more than conquerors over their spiritual enemies. And when their wanderings in this wilderness world are finished, conducts them, like Israel at Jordan, safely through death, and puts them in possession of the promised land and the new Jerusalem.

While, however, such encouraging representations are ever held forth, all who profess to believe the Gospel are solemnly warned, by the punishment of that generation of Israel whose carcasses fell in the wilderness on account of unbelief, concerning whom God swore in his wrath, that it should not enter into his rest, lest they too should come short of that rest which remaineth to the people of God. Speaking of the journey of Israel through the wilderness, and of this punishment which overtook so many of them, the Apostle Paul says, "Now these things were our examples, (literally, *types*), to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted—and fell in one day three-and-twenty thousand." The whole typical system, then, appears of very great importance, both in the way of instruction, of encouragement, of warning, and of evidence; and the Christian who does not carefully examine and attend to it, is neglect-



ing one great means of edification which God has provided in his word.

This typical use of the kingdom of Israel to prefigure the Messiah, his kingdom, and salvation, is treated of at large in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle was written to convince the believing Jews, that the law, as containing a shadow of good things to come, had passed away, now that these things had arrived. The Apostle announces his design in what may be termed the Key of the Epistle, when he says, in the beginning of the 6th chapter, "Let us go on unto *perfection*," or the finishing. This expression, which occurs so frequently in the course of his discussion, is the same with that used by the Lord, when he said in his last intercessory prayer, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" and when he bowed his head on the cross and said, "It is finished," or *perfected*.

"The law," says Paul, (Heb. vii. 9), "made nothing *perfect*." The legal service (ix. 9), was a figure, (literally, a *parable*,) "for the time then present, which could not make him that performed it *perfect*, as pertaining to the conscience." — "The law having only a shadow of good things to come, (x. 1), could never, with those sacrifices



which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto *perfect*."

*Perfection* (vii. 11) was not by the Levitical priesthood, for (viii. 5) its priests served only according to a representation and shadow of heavenly things, which was plain from this, that Moses, when about to make the tabernacle, was admonished of God, "For see," saith he, "that thou make all things according to the *pattern*," (literally, *type*,) "shewed to thee in the Mount." It was necessary then, (ix. 23), that the *patterns* of things in the heavens should be purified with the blood of animals, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

But Christ being come, (ix. 11), an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more *perfect* tabernacle, is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

"It became him (ii. 10) for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *perfect* through sufferings." And being made *perfect*, (v. 9), he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. The law maketh men high priests, (vii. 28), which have infir-



mity ; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son who is consecrated, (literally, *perfected*,) for ever more." (x. 14,) " By one offering he hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified." (xii. 2,) He is the Captain and the *perfecter* of faith.

Arrived at all that is connected with this perfection, (xii. 23,) we are come " to the spirits of just men made *perfect*" by the work of Jesus. (xi. 40.) Without it, which has been performed in our days, they could not have been " made *perfect*."

Thus, as the Apostle had showed that Melchisedec was a type of Christ ; so he shews, from a variety of considerations, the weakness and imperfection of the legal sacrifices and priesthood ; and his concluding argument is, that the Holy Ghost had expressly declared it, when he gave intimation by the prophets, that the Lord would " make a new covenant with the house of Israel," through which remission being obtained, all further offering for sin must consequently cease. Christ, therefore, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, is, (Rom. x. 4.) the end or *perfection* of the law to whom it pointed, and in whom its typical design was consummated.



“The law then contained a shadow of good things to come,” and the priests who offered gifts according to it, served unto the example of heavenly things. “That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual.” This mode of gradual developement of a literal and mystical signification of making natural things represent spiritual things, and one thing lead on to what was to follow, while it served the immediate purposes of regulation and instruction, affords irresistible evidence of a consistent and premeditated plan. Accordingly this last is one principal use, which, in the New Testament, is made of the numerous typical representations of the Old. To these they call men’s attention, as they do to the prophecies, to prove that what had at last taken place, was only the grand consummation of what had long been shadowed forth.



## CHAP. IX.

*Prophecies of the Old Testament.*

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CONNECTED with the typical representations which prefigured the Messiah and his redemption, the Old Testament Scriptures contain a series of promises and predictions, by which his coming was foretold. By this means a body of evidence, from the earliest times, was laid up in store, which was afterwards to be brought forward in its place. This kind of evidence, when properly considered, affords the strongest conviction of the truth of what it attests. As miracles present immediate evidence of the operation and finger of God, so the fulfilment of prophecy equally denotes similar interposition. The knowledge of future contingent events belongs to God only. On this ground is founded the challenge to the idols of the heathen nations, recorded by Isaiah xli. 21, "Produce your cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons, saith the king of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and



shew us what shall happen. Let them shew the former things what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them, or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are God's." Isa. xlii. 9, "Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them."

The coincidence of an event with a particular dream or conjecture, dignified as it might be with the name of a prophecy, a few detached instances of which we meet with in profane history, can impress no conviction of Divine interposition. It would be more remarkable were such coincidences never to occur. But the prophecies of the Scriptures claim a very different kind of regard. They are not referable only to a few instances, neither are they of an insulated and desultory nature. Delivered and distinctly recorded through a long succession of ages, they consist of an immense number of predictions, linked together in a connected series or chain, and terminating in one grand object, to which they conduct us through an almost endless variety of subordinate events. Some degree of obscurity, however, must always belong to prophe-



cy, which was not intended to make men prophets, or to interfere with human agency. "But the veil of apparent obscurity which must therefore distinguish prophecy from history, is a proof of wise contrivance, and what on first view increases the obscurity, on due inquiry increases the evidence, and determines the meaning of the prediction."

That dispensation of prophetic intimations which was vouchsafed to the Jewish nation, greatly contributed to produce the intended effect of maintaining among them the worship of the one living and true God, while all the surrounding nations, the most civilized in the world, were sunk in the grossest idolatry. This, together with the constant and unequivocal proofs of miraculous interposition they so often witnessed, to which their attention was previously called by their prophets, can alone account for the firm adherence of the Jews to the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, even while their real meaning has been so much misunderstood and opposed by them. This strong conviction of the Divine origin of the word of God, is entirely distinct from the knowledge of that system of truth which it contains. The former, as we witness every day, may be firmly held,



most conscientiously contended for, and ably stated, by one who is altogether mistaken with respect to the latter. Many tenaciously and seriously appropriate to themselves the name of Christians, who are ignorant of the doctrine of Christ. Many have written clearly on the evidences of Christianity, who know not what Christianity is. Many will say to Christ, in the last day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then he will profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity." It was this state of mind to which our Lord adverted, respecting the Jews, when he declared that they trusted in Moses, but did not believe him. "Do not think," says he, "that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Prophecy pervades the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. In the first period, from the history of the creation till Samuel's time, although many instances of the prediction of future events occur, they are not so frequent as after.



wards. But, from the days of Samuel, a succession of prophets was raised up, and their predictions became more clear and minute as the time of their accomplishment drew near.

This system of prophecy divides itself into three branches. One branch consists of prophecies relating to the Jews and the neighbouring nations, most of which were fulfilled during the period of the Old Testament dispensation. Prophecies of another branch have a twofold interpretation, and refer to two distinct accomplishments : the one more immediate and subordinate, before the coming of the Messiah; the other at, or after his coming, which is the ultimate and principal object. The prophecies of a third branch refer solely to the Messiah and the times of the Gospel.

Nothing could be more completely adapted than this arrangement, to answer the design of prophecy. Had there been no prophecies of the first branch, and had the fulfilment of all predictions been deferred till the time of the Messiah, the Jews, who were the keepers of the prophecies, would not have been furnished with that evidence of their truth, which was necessary to command their confidence. But when they witnessed the exact accomplishment of so many of these pro-



phesies, some delivered in their own age, and others which stood on their records from more distant periods; and when, from time to time, they saw the inspiration of their prophets put to this decisive test, and not failing in one single instance, they received the strongest pledge that these predictions which referred to their expected Messiah, and times more remote, would also be fulfilled. These prophecies again, which, having a twofold accomplishment, point to two distinct objects, served the purposes both of the first and last branches, each of which had only single events in view. In their first fulfilment, they verified to the Jews of their day their inspired character, and were instrumental in supporting and carrying on the administration of the theocratical government. They also furnished a typical representation of what belonged to their spiritual and principal design in the future economy. The accomplishment of those of the last branch, uttered at such a distance of time, and fulfilled in such circumstances as preclude every idea of collusion, exhibits a standing miracle to all who live after that period, which, as long as the authenticated histories of the prediction and accomplishment are preserved, cannot be impaired.

Numerous examples of these prophecies, of



which the ancient Jews witnessed both the delivery and the accomplishment, are to be met with in the different books of the prophets. Some of them were fulfilled almost immediately after they were delivered, or within one or two years; and others at more distant periods. The prophecies to Ahab of his death, and to Hezekiah of the prolongation of his life, and of protection from Senacherib, are instances, among many others, that were almost immediately accomplished. The prophecy of Joshua respecting Jericho, the fulfilment of which is recorded nearly 500 years afterwards; the prophecy concerning Josiah the king, delivered above 300 years before he was born, and accompanied by the rending of the altar of Jeroboam, as an immediate sign of the certainty of its accomplishment; and the prophecy of the founding of the temple by Cyrus, of which the prediction is delivered by Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the fulfilment recorded by Ezra, at the distance of nearly 200 years, are instances of the prediction and accomplishment of more distant events.

Prophecies which have a twofold accomplishment, abound in every part of the Old Testament Scriptures. A great portion of the Book of Psalms is of this description. Many of the Psalms



relate the experience of David and of the people of God in his dealings with them, their trials, their afflictions and consolations. But a greater than either of them is often there. Under the name of David, and the account of his troubles and persecutions, of his throne, his government, and his kingdom, its privileges, permanence, and extent, Jesus Christ, his humiliation and sufferings, his exaltation and redemption, are distinctly described. Some of these descriptions belong more fully, some entirely to David, others only to the Messiah. But many of them clearly indicate the twofold interpretation, and shew that the first object intended has not exhausted the full import of the prophecy; and that we must go on to the second, in order to comprehend the whole that is designed. Sometimes one part of the prophecy refers to the first, and another part to the second; so that making a reference to both, we must assign a distinct part to each. At other times, the description of both is so blended, that in all the parts we have the twofold fulfilment plain and distinct.

By passing over one or other of these senses of this branch of the prophecies, many have erred in contrary extremes. One party sees in them no other object but the Messiah, and so not only



fails to observe the beauty and utility of the twofold interpretation, but also loses much of the benefit to be derived from contemplating a true portrait, drawn by the Holy Spirit, of the experience of other believers, with which they might compare and confirm their own. The other party, erring in a more hurtful extreme, discern nothing further than a faithful delineation of the state and circumstances of men of like passions with themselves. Into the first of the above errors, Christians are chiefly led, by observing that it is often only with reference to their ultimate design, that these prophecies are quoted in the New Testament. Overlooking this circumstance, they point to these quotations as certain proofs of the soundness of their interpretation; although this manner of quotation only results from the connection in which the prediction is brought to view. When an Apostle passes over the primary sense, which had been long before received, it is no disparagement to that sense, nor the smallest indication that he does not admit what had been previously and universally acknowledged.

In the case of the prophetic declaration of Nathan to David concerning Solomon, we have a clear example of the prophecies of the twofold



interpretation, 2 Sam. vii. 12. 17. This prophecy evidently refers to Solomon, who was to be set upon the throne of Israel as soon as the days of David were fulfilled; and in this sense it is expressly applied to him by David near his death. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the same prediction is expressly applied to the Messiah. In the first instance, it referred to Solomon, in whom, as a type, it was fulfilled in its subordinate sense. But it was ultimately and fully accomplished in his antetype, who was to build a very different house from the temple at Jerusalem, and whose kingdom, in his own person, was, in the most absolute sense, to endure for ever. This is expressly referred to in the 89th Psalm, where this prediction, much enlarged, is evidently applied to the Messiah. It is not, then, either in the way of what is termed accommodation, (as is often erroneously supposed respecting passages in the New Testament of a like import,) or as setting aside the proper application to Solomon, that this portion of Scripture is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but as its ultimate and most extensive application.

In the same manner, the spiritual meaning of typical representations are often quoted by the Apostles. We are informed, that when Moses



came down from the mount, he put a veil on his face, which shone so that the Israelites could not look upon him. Paul, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, introduces this circumstance of the veil; but, taking no notice of the literal sense, he speaks only of the spiritual import of that action, both as it referred to Moses and to the people of Israel. This veil concealing the glory of Moses's face, and the people not being able to behold it, signified that carnal commandment under which the spirit or new dispensation was concealed, to which, as the end or object of that commandment, the Israelites, in general a carnal people, who would have been dazzled with its glory, could not stedfastly look. In the same manner, the description in the 19th Psalm, of the sun in the firmament, has a strict literal and primary meaning; but it is also a type of him who is called the Sun of Righteousness, who, by his word, is the spiritual light of the world. The Apostle, therefore, in the 10th of the Romans, quotes this description in the last sense, substituting for their line, or the orderly course of the sun and other celestial bodies, their sound or voice; thus taking the spiritual meaning, which was chiefly intended, and which suits his object in that place, while he



drops the literal, although also a just and acknowledged sense. \*

The third branch of prophecy relates solely to the times of the Messiah. “*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” To him give all the prophets witness. The glory of his person, the importance of his work, its progress and completion from the beginning to the end of time, is the grand theme of prophecy, to which every other part of it is subordinate. As this branch contains such material evidence of the truth of revelation, and so many divine attestations to him who came to fulfil the law and the prophets, it is necessary to trace it at some length. And in order to give a connected view of that series of predictions which refer to the Messiah, some of the prophecies that belong to the second branch will also be included.

The first intimation of the Redeemer was given to our first parents immediately after the fall. From different parts of Scripture we learn, that an order of beings higher than man had sinned and rebelled against God. One of them is represented as the chief, and superior to the rest. Actuated by malignity against God and

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\* See Owen on the Hebrews, chap. iv. 1, 2.



all his works, this leader of the fallen angels entered the serpent for the purpose of concealment; and through that animal, as a medium of communication, addressed our first parents. Under this disguise, and pretending to have discovered the excellence of the qualities of the forbidden fruit, and the certainty that the threat annexed to transgression would not be executed, but that, on the contrary, the happiest effects would follow, he seduced them to disobey the commandment of God.

This temptation has often been represented as a very trifling one, and, as such, has been ridiculed. But, so far from this being the case, it was the strongest that could be presented. It included the whole circle of Satan's temptations to this hour,—the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, with an assurance that no punishment would follow. “Ye shall not surely die.”—“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof.” Thus the woman was seduced, and she seduced her husband.

Man was thus involved in rebellion against his Creator. Sin entered the world, and death



by sin. An immediate change took place. He who had before enjoyed the friendship of his gracious and condescending Lord, by whom he was surrounded with all the blessings of creation, now trembled when he heard his voice, and fled and hid himself among the trees of the garden. From thence being called forth, and charged with the sin he had committed, he laid it on the woman, who again charged it on the serpent. In this situation, with all their guilt discovered, God, having purposes of mercy to fallen man, turned to the serpent, and pronounced the following sentence: Gen. iii. 14, 15, "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The serpent had been the instrument of the temptation, and on that animal the sentence of a corresponding punishment and degradation in the change now to take place upon it, was, in the letter and outward visible operation, to be carried into effect. But as, under the serpent's



form, another greater than the serpent lay concealed, the curse, in its spirit and full import, was directed against him. That this was the case, is evident from the whole subsequent tenor of the Scriptures, in which the Devil is uniformly spoken of as the seducer and murderer of man, and as having introduced all that misery and confusion which prevail in the world. Isaiah denominates him “the *serpent*,” whom the Lord will punish. And in the Book of Revelation, he is called “that old *serpent*, who is the Devil and Satan.”

The above sentence, directed against the tempter of the human race, mysteriously opened to the latter a prospect of the greatest blessings. The last part of it intimates what was intended for man. This also was to have a literal accomplishment, and has been verified in that remarkable enmity and abhorrence which has ever subsisted between men and serpents, and the deadly wounds they have mutually inflicted. But, like the former part, it had also a higher and spiritual meaning. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman.” Although the malignant and powerful spirit who spoke through the serpent had overcome the woman in his first assault, God was now to set them in opposition



to one another. It is added, “and between thy seed and her seed.” This intimated the division in the human race that was to be occasioned by the entrance of sin. The woman was to have an offspring which should stand in opposition to Satan; but Satan also was to have a progeny that should hold with him. Here that enmity betwixt the children of the wicked one and the children of God, which was exerted to the utmost, when he, who is emphatically called the seed of the woman, appeared, and which, from the days of Cain and Abel to the present hour, has been written in the history of the world in characters of blood, is at once discovered and accounted for. It is added, “*He* shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” While the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman was to be perpetual, a decisive combat was at length to take place betwixt *Satan himself* and her seed, one spoken of individually, in whom (by virtue of their union with him, and the life they derive from him) all the rest are included. In this combat, the latter was to suffer. His heel was to be bruised. But in his turn, he was to attack, not the extremities, but the seat of Satan’s power, on whom he was to inflict a deadly wound. “He shall bruise *thy*



head." The name given to this Deliverer is particularly to be remarked,—“the seed of the woman.” This refers to the peculiar manner in which he was to be introduced into the world. His descent is confined to the woman. He is her seed, as he was to be conceived in the womb of a virgin, and thus, in the proper sense, born of the woman alone. This triumphant Deliverer, too, was to spring from the general mother of the human race, and so was to stand equally related to Jews and Gentiles.

In this early and remarkable prophecy, a compendious view is given of the whole Gospel. As verified in its accomplishment, it is plain and striking, and totally inapplicable to any thing else that has ever happened in the world. The whole revelation of God, made from that period at different times during 4000 years, till the canon of the sacred Scriptures was completed, is only the gradual developement of this prophetical intimation, which is still going on to its full accomplishment.

What is here foretold exactly answers the description of Jesus Christ given by the Apostles. “He came,” says one, “to destroy the works of the devil.” Another of them de-



clares, that “as the children whom God had given him were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself partook of the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil.” The bruising of his heel in the contest, is thus explained by his submitting to death for a season, in his human nature, the lowest part of him, being the flesh and blood of which he took part; while his bruising the serpent’s head is represented as the destruction of Satan.

From what immediately follows in the narrative, we learn, that the sentence pronounced on the serpent was understood and accepted by our first parents as a revelation of mercy to mankind. For as soon as God had also declared the suffering state to which they were now to be subjected, on account of the sin they had committed, and that it should terminate in death, Adam called his wife’s name Eve, or life. Formerly, when in a state of integrity, and when God had blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply,” Adam called his wife’s name “woman, because she was taken out of man.” But now when the sentence of death is pronounced upon them, he calls her Eve (*Life*), shewing his persuasion



that in her seed another life was now provided. The piety of the expression of Eve at the birth of her first-born son, whether or not she supposed him to be the promised seed, should also be remarked, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," or "a man, the Lord." The new feeling of shame which our first parents experienced, as well as the change consequent to the sentence on the serpent's appearance, must have been strong confirmations to them that all the future threatenings and promises would also be verified. Sacrifice likewise appears to have been immediately instituted, emblematically pointing out the way in which atonement by substitution was to be made for sin.

Another prophecy respecting the Messiah was delivered immediately after the flood, at the beginning of the new world, as the former had been given at the beginning of the old. It was declared by Noah, on the occasion of his being employed by God to pronounce a curse upon one of his descendants, who appears to have been of the seed of the serpent.

"And he said,

Cursed be Canaan;

A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.



And he said,  
Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem ;  
And Canaan shall be their servant.  
God shall enlarge Japheth,  
And shall dwell in the tents of Shem ;  
And Canaan shall be their servant."

This prediction, as it refers to Canaan, shall be taken up in another place. At present we are to consider it as it applies to Shem.

The blessing here pronounced on Shem is, that God should DWELL IN HIS TENTS. The posterity of Ham and Japheth soon fell into idolatry ; but the descendants of Shem were preserved in the worship of God. Shem was the father of the Hebrews, and God established his covenant with Abraham, who was one of them, promising " to be a God to him and to his seed in their generations."

This remarkable blessing was strikingly verified all along in the history of Israel, the descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac, till the Messiah appeared among them. God said, " I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."

God's dwelling in the tents of Shem here promised, was shadowed forth to Israel, by the manifestation of the divine presence in the pillar of



cloud and of fire. The element of fire had been used from the beginning as a token of the presence of God. It appeared at the expulsion of our first parents from paradise, as a flaming sword; at the making of the covenant with Abraham, as a burning lamp; and at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, when “the Lord descended upon it in fire.” The pillar of cloud and of fire guarded and conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, and in the wilderness, rested on the Tabernacle, and dwelt between the cherubim in the first temple.

When David was not permitted to build the temple, as he intended, the Lord said, “I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another.” On the dedication of the temple, Solomon said in astonishment, “Will God in very deed dwell with man on earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have builded!” As soon as Solomon had made an end of praying, “fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifice; and the glory of the Lord filled the house.”—“In that house, God dwelt in the cloud, amidst the darkness of which the rays of divine effulgence shone forth, which



indwelling the Jews expressed by the term Shechina. This Shechina, or cloud of glory, was the visible symbol of the divine presence, the fulness of the Godhead, which was to dwell bodily in the man Christ Jesus."

The second temple which, when erected, appeared so far inferior to the first, did not possess this visible token of the Divine presence as the first had done. But concerning that house, it was declared, "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts." Accordingly, in that second temple of which he took possession as his Father's house, Messiah himself appeared.

Another prophecy of the same import with that of Noah, was delivered by Zechariah, 500 years before the coming of Christ, Zec. ii. 10, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo I come, and I will DWELL in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people, and I will DWELL in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee." Of the accomplishment of these predictions, in their fullest sense, the Apostle John, a descendant of Shem, at length informs us. "In



the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,—and the Word was made flesh and DWELT among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The word here translated “dwell,” literally signifies tabernacled, or DWELT AS IN A TENT. The word tabernacle is used in Scripture to signify the human body.

How exact has been the fulfilment of Noah’s remarkable prophecy! It was fulfilled to a certain degree all along, and figuratively illustrated for many ages. At last it was ultimately accomplished in its most extensive import, in Jesus Christ DWELLING in a mortal body—God manifest in the flesh, whose descent, according to this prediction, was at the beginning of the new world restricted to the line of Shem. And now the promise thus fulfilled, is no longer confined to one branch of the human race. The blessing of Abraham, the heir of the world, is come on all nations. God now DWELLS among his people of every descent. “Thou hast ascended on high,” said the Psalmist, addressing the Messiah, “thou hast received gifts for men, yea even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” The pillar of cloud by day, and



of fire by night, which indicated to Israel the presence of God, no longer rests exclusively on the tents of Shem. The period is come of which it was declared, "The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all, the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge and for a covert, from storm and from rain."—"I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her." The *Lord* Jesus now dwells in his people's hearts by faith, and they are habitations of God through the *Spirit*. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and *God* in him."

The next prediction of the Messiah was delivered to Abraham, from whom it was declared he should descend. This gracious promise was repeated to him at different times: and on occasion of his offering up his son Isaac, it was renewed in these words, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The term *seed* is here used in an individual sense, as the Apostle Paul affirms, and as it is used in many other parts of Scripture. It is distinguished from the many na-



tions that were to descend from Abraham, for in it all nations were to be blessed; and it is distinguished from Isaac, when it is promised that it should come in his line; and when to Isaac himself the same promise is afterwards renewed. It therefore refers only to that individual descended from Abraham, in whom alone this prediction is verified. This blessing, in which Abraham himself was included, was the blessing of righteousness, which comes by the Messiah, through faith. Abraham, we are told, believed God, and he accounted it to him for righteousness. And to him, and to all who have the faith of Abraham, this promise has been accomplished in the most complete manner.

The same promise which had been made to Abraham, with the limitation of it to the line of Isaac, was repeated to Isaac himself. And about 100 years after it had been made to Abraham, it was again made in the same form to Jacob.

The next prophetic promise of the Messiah, is given by Jacob, on his death-bed, when, in blessing his twelve sons, he singled out Judah as the progenitor of the Messiah, and said, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise. Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine ene-



mies ; and thy father's children shall bow down before thee.—The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” This prediction not only confirms the descent of the Messiah to *one* of the numerous family of Jacob, but limits a period for his appearance. And that pre-eminence now bestowed on Judah, of whom his father declared that his brethren were to “praise” him, and his “father's children to bow down before him,” which, after Jacob's death, was always given to the tribe of Judah, was continued to it till after the coming of Christ.

The tribe of Judah was first in offering its gifts at the Tabernacle, as well as in the order of encampment of the tribes. In the journeys of Israel, it was appointed to march foremost. Moses denominated it the *lawgiver*. David declared that God had chosen Judah to be the *ruler*. The royalty was granted to Judah in the person of David, and his descendants ; and this tribe communicated its name to the remains of all the other tribes. Jerusalem, the chief city of Judah, was the capital of the whole nation, and there the temple was built, to which



all the other tribes resorted to worship; where alone the sacrifices were offered, and all the services which prefigured the Messiah were performed. Even during the captivity in Babylon, the tribe of Judah continued a distinct people, and had with it one of its own princes, who lived in a degree of royal splendour. Afterwards, when under the dominion of the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, it continued to have senators, magistrates, and princes of its own, who governed according to its own laws. But above all, the theocracy or government of God, under which Judah was placed, continued without interruption till Shiloh came, allowed by Jews and Christians to be a name for the Messiah, to whom the gathering of the nations was to be. Soon after his coming, the government of Judah was finally subverted, and their temple and capital destroyed. The Jews were expelled from Judea, and it became utterly impossible for them to attend to the observances of the law which was then abrogated. Here then we have a most remarkable prediction of the coming of the Messiah. Jacob, uttering by the Spirit of God, particular and minute predictions, respecting each of his twelve sons, which were all afterwards verified, singles out one of them,



declares his pre-eminence over his brethren, and that he should be invested with power, and continue to enjoy it, till one should descend from him, to whom the gathering of the nations was to be. And all this verified through the whole intervening period, was fully accomplished at the distance of about 1690 years.

In conformity to the above prediction, is found another declaration to the same effect, in the first Book of Chronicles, "The genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birth-right, for Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief Ruler."

Above 200 years after the death of Jacob, another prediction of the Messiah, descriptive of the office he was to bear, was delivered by Moses to Israel: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Thus, even in establishing the first covenant with the people of Israel, intimation was given, that another Prophet was to arise from among them, who was to supersede Moses. This prophecy applies only to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. No other Jewish prophet ever pretended that he was like to Moses, to whom "the Lord spoke face to face, as a man speaketh



unto his friend." The law too, which was given by Moses, was declared by all the succeeding prophets of Israel, to have continued in force in their day. Malachi, the *last* of them, in connection with a clear prediction of the Messiah, and of his forerunner, says, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." And it continued in force till after, in the presence of witnesses, Moses the giver of that law, and Elijah its most eminent supporter, appeared on the mount of transfiguration, conversing with Jesus Christ, and a voice from heaven announced, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM." In Jesus Christ then, this prediction was accomplished. He was raised up from the *midst* of Israel. *Like* Moses, he was found in fashion as a man. *Like* Moses, he was to speak the words of God. But he was to be a Prophet greater than Moses, whose words were to be in force till *He* should appear, after which the people were to turn from Moses, and to *hear him*.

In the time of Moses, a general prophecy concerning the Messiah's appearance in a distant age, was uttered by Balaam, when Balak, King of Moab, had sent for him to curse Israel, but



whom God commanded him to bless. “Numbers xxiv. 15, 16, 17, “And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said, He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open, I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.”

About four hundred years after the time of Moses, the descent of the Messiah, which before had been confined to the TRIBE of Judah, was, by another prediction, limited to the family of David, an INDIVIDUAL of that tribe. This prophecy, delivered by Nathan to David, has been already referred to among the prophecies to which a twofold interpretation belongs. It was also delivered at great length in the 89th Psalm, where it begins with these words: “I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn unto David, my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.” That David understood this to be a prophecy of the Messiah, and that the subsequent prophets so understood it, is clear. Isaiah,



nearly 300 years after, in reference to the Messiah, says, "There shall come forth a rod out of the *stem of Jesse*, (the Father of David,) and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him ; with righteousness shall he judge." This term "*branch*" is often afterwards applied to the Messiah. Jeremiah xxiii. 5, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely ; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah, our Righteousness."—Jeremiah xxxiii. 15, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."

Not only David, who, it appears from a variety of places in the Psalms, clearly understood that his seed ultimately spoken of was one greater than Solomon, but all the succeeding prophets long after the death of Solomon, and after the building of the temple which he erected, look to another son of David, another house, and another throne. "Unto us," says Isaiah, "a child is born ; unto us a son is given ; and the govern-



ment shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, (or the Father of the everlasting age,) the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever."

At length, in contemplation of the coming of the Messiah, the prophet Isaiah announced, in plain language, the meaning of the expression in the first intimation of mercy, "the seed of the woman."—"Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," that is, "God with us." Under the reign of Ahaz, he and the people of Judea were filled with the greatest consternation, on hearing of a confederacy against them by Syria and Israel. The prophet Isaiah was sent to comfort them. Taking with him his son, whose name signified, "a remnant shall return," which indicated the determination of God to save his people, he assured Ahaz that the purposes of his enemies should not stand, but that they should be destroyed. The message, however, failing to give confidence to Ahaz, he was desired to ask a sign,



“either in the depth or in the height above.” Upon his declining to do so he is reproved, but it is declared that God himself would give a sign. “Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The attention of Ahaz and his people was thus turned from the present alarming appearances, and directed to the certainty of the predictions concerning the Messiah, in the fulfilment of which their preservation was involved. It remained on their records, which they had received from their ancestors as the infallible word of God, that the sceptre was not to depart from Judah till Shiloh came; and God had promised to David, that of the fruit of his loins Christ should sit on his throne. The extraordinary circumstance now announced, which was to be connected with that great event, together with the assurance they had just received from the prophet, were sufficient to banish all their fears, and to satisfy them, not only as to their surviving the present confederacy, but as to the durable stability of their government.

The prophet Micah, who prophesied about the same time with Isaiah, in denouncing a threatening against the Jews on account of their sins, also intimates the birth of the Messiah, though in lan-



guage less plain, when he says, "Therefore will he give them up, *until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth*; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." That this prediction refers to the Messiah is evident, because it immediately connects with the following plain declaration concerning the place where he was to be born.

The BIRTH-PLACE of the Messiah, Micah announced in the following words: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth hath been from old from everlasting." Bethlehem Ephratah, or Bethlehem in Judah, to distinguish it from another place of the same name, was the native town of David, that great personal type, as well as progenitor of the Messiah. It was now declared to be the birth-place of David's son, who was also David's Lord. The circumstances which afterwards led to the fulfilment of this prophecy, was a decree published by Augustus Cæsar for a general enrolment throughout the Roman empire. On this occasion, the mother of Jesus, who then resided at Nazareth of Galilee, was under the necessity of going to Bethlehem with



Joseph, to whom she was espoused, to be enrolled there, because they were of the house of David; and there she brought forth her son. Thus the Roman government, totally unconscious of it, was employed to minister, by its decree, to this accomplishment of the purposes of God.

At the birth of the Messiah, a circumstance took place in Bethlehem, which was also the subject of prophecy. Herod being informed that he who was called King of the Jews was born there, being alarmed at the prospect of danger to his government, probably from fear of some popular commotion, and supposing that he could cut off the occasion of it at once, sent and slew all the children of the place who were under two years old. (Jer. xxxi. 15), Nearly 600 years before this slaughter of the infants took place, the Prophet Jeremiah, by a bold and beautiful example of personification, suited to the style of prophecy, introduces Rachael, the wife of Jacob, who had been buried between Rama and Bethlehem, bitterly lamenting this catastrophe. "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachael weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Mary and her son, before that slaughter took place, had

caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for



removed from Bethlehem ; but it is worthy of notice, that, owing to this circumstance of the slaughter of these children, the date of the birth of the Messiah was precisely fixed, and all pretensions to that character were cut off, which might have been set up by any other born there at that time, which, by another prophecy, was fixed as the period of his appearance.

Although born at Bethlehem, the Messiah was not to continue there. Galilee was to be the place of his principal residence, where especially his heavenly doctrine was to be taught, and where so many of his wonderful works were to be performed. This circumstance was also intimated by the Prophet Isaiah : “ The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.”

The EXACT TIME of the Messiah's appearance, connected with several other remarkable circumstances, was at length revealed to the Prophet Daniel. In the 9th chapter of his Prophecies, he mentions, that having observed it was predicted by the Prophet Jeremiah that the captivity of the Jews at Babylon was to last seventy



years, and that these years were now drawing to a conclusion, he addressed himself in prayer to God, beseeching him to remember his people in their affliction. While engaged in confession of their sins, and in earnest supplication, the angel Gabriel announced to him the following minute and comprehensive prediction, Daniel ix. 24, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for



the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

In this vision, Daniel was expressly informed of the coming of Messiah, of the time of his coming, and of his being cut off. The whole period fixed is seventy weeks, which was to be dated from the time of the going forth of the commandment to rebuild the city. In prophetic language, a day is used to signify a year, as was expressly announced to the Prophet Ezekiel, iv. 6, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." This was a way of reckoning to which the Jews had been all along accustomed. They were commanded in the law of Moses to number seven weeks of years to the jubilee, which was 49 years. In this prophecy, the computation is made in the same way, by seventy weeks, or seventy sevens, that is seven times the length of the period of the captivity at Babylon, in reference to which Daniel had been putting up his supplications. Seventy weeks are seventy returns of the Sabbatical year, or 490 years. This period is here fixed for the continuance of Jerusalem which was about to be rebuilt, as the holy city where the instituted service of God was performed, when an effectual sacrifice for sin would

cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for



be offered, which would make an end of sin or sin offering as heretofore, according to the law; would make reconciliation for iniquity, and introduce an everlasting righteousness, when the visions and prophecies would receive their accomplishment, and the holy one of God be anointed.

The whole time allotted for these events is divided into three distinct parts. The first is seven weeks, the second sixty-two weeks, and the third one week. Daniel was to know and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, should be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks. Here two periods of the seventy weeks are fixed, in which two events were to take place. In seven weeks, or 49 years, the city was to be built in turbulent times; and after the end of 62 weeks, that is 434 years, which added to the 49 years, make 483, the Messiah was to be cut off. This was to happen in the 70th week, for it was to be *after* the 62 weeks. Messiah was then to confirm the covenant; and in the midst of the last, or 70th week, he was to cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. The hostile invaders (the people of the prince that should come) should make the



city desolate till its decisive destruction, which would afterwards take place.

We have here a most remarkable prophecy, delivered above 500 years before the event, which, besides what it declares of the Messiah's salvation, as finishing transgression, and introducing an everlasting righteousness, contains a variety of most important circumstances, all future at the time when Daniel wrote. The following public facts are expressly noted. 1. The commandment to build the city. 2. The building of it. 3. The character of the times during which this was to take place. 4. The coming of the Messiah. 5. His dying a violent death. 6. The closing up of prophecy. 7. The end of the legal sacrifices. 8. The destruction of the city and temple. 9. The signal nature of this destruction. And the times when all these things were to happen specified in their distinct periods.

All this received an exact accomplishment. The commandment to rebuild the city was given to Ezra by Artaxerxes, in the 7th year of his reign, and is recorded in the book of Ezra, and the building of the city was effected. At the set time Jesus, designated by a variety of other prophecies to be the Messiah, appeared. He was put to death, yet many became his disciples, with



whom he confirmed his covenant. The time of the law and the prophets came to an end; and the legal sacrifices lost their obligation and efficacy. Soon after, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, as by an inundation. The sacrifices then ceased to be offered, even in form. From that day to the present, the Jews have been extremely desirous to renew them; but Jerusalem, being the only place where they could be offered, and it having been ever since in the hands of their enemies, this has been totally out of their power.

The appearance of the Messiah was also to be marked by the proclamation of a FORERUNNER, who should announce his approach. This circumstance is foretold by the prophets Isaiah and Malachi. In the 40th chapter of Isaiah, after exhorting the people of God to be of good comfort, from the consideration that their conflicts were about to terminate, and their iniquity to be pardoned, the prophet exclaims, (Isaiah xl. 3, 4, 5,) "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the



glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." The prophet Malachi (iii. 12.) says, "*Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth.*" Malachi concludes his prophecy, and closes the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures, with calling the attention of the Jews to the coming of this forerunner, and the effect it should produce. He denominates him Elijah, from his similarity in zeal, temper, and appearance to that great prophet. Malachi iv, 5, 6, "*Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*"

Thus the forerunner of the Messiah was to go before him, to remove obstacles, and to prepare his way,—and should proclaim that the glory of the Lord was about to be revealed, and that all flesh (Jews and Gentiles) should see it; and that suddenly (immediately after his forerunner) this messen-



ger of the covenant, the proprietor of the temple, should appear. Contrary to what might have been expected, it was also declared, that the place where this forerunner was to deliver his testimony should be the *wilderness*; while the transient nature of his office is intimated by the way in which he is introduced as a “*voice*,” which as soon as it is uttered is gone. All this was literally fulfilled when Jesus Christ appeared, preceded by John the Baptist, “crying in the wilderness of Judea, Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

Before the coming of the Messiah, the Jews were to be brought very low on account of their sins. Ezekiel says, (xxi. 25, 26, 27,) “And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same, exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.” Here it is foretold, that the diadem or crown of Israel should be taken off. Hitherto it had continued in the line of David, but now it should be removed, till *he should come whose right it was*. This overturning is repeated three



times. Ezekiel prophesied during the Babylonish captivity ; and after his prophecy, three great overturnings of the world were to take place, before the Messiah should appear. The first by the Persians, the second by the Grecians, and the third by the Romans. During the dominion of the latter, He came, who was the true king of Israel, whose right the crown was, and on whose head, according to the many predictions of the everlasting stability of his government, it shall remain for ever. “ Thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel,—Thus saith the Lord, if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne.”

The great shakings and revolutions among the nations that were to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, were likewise foretold. When, on the return of the Jews from Babylon, the second temple was erected, it appeared so inferior to the first, that the people were greatly discouraged. The Prophet Haggai was therefore commissioned to inform them, that the glory of that latter house would be greater than of the former, for that he who was the de-



sire of all nations was to appear in it, Haggai, ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of Hosts. And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Thus Haggai foretold that, previous to the coming of Messiah, God would shake all nations, and intimated how great and general this shaking would be, by saying, "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land."

The same prophet immediately afterwards declares, Haggai ii. 22, "And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them, and the horses and their riders shall come down every one by the sword of his brother." According as it was predicted, so it was fulfilled; and after this period till the coming of Messiah, the greatest revolutions that history re-



cords took place. Almost all the nations of the known world were overturned again and again. Thus the world was prepared for the coming of the Messiah, and when he appeared, the whole was subjected to one powerful government, and a universal peace succeeded these overturnings and convulsions of the earth.

Here we have the true reason of the exaltation of the Roman empire. All that has happened in the world, both before and since the coming of the Messiah, has been entirely subservient to the establishment of his everlasting kingdom.

The Person, the Character, and the Office of the Messiah, his Sufferings, his Death and Resurrection, his Exaltation, and the Progress of his kingdom and religion, are minutely described by the prophets.

Respecting his PERSON, the Prophets, like the Apostles, explicitly teach that he is the supreme God, and that uniting in himself the Divine and human natures, he was to appear in the world as the Son of God, and the Father's servant. They also proclaim a distinction in the Godhead, and speak of a Divine person, incarnate, the Messiah, Immanuel, God with us, David's son, and David's Lord.



After proclaiming his forerunner, who was to prepare his way, and saying, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it," the prophet Isaiah, in prospect of this coming of the Messiah, exclaims, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain! O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the



balance; behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."

In the prophecy of Isaiah, already quoted, which declares, that a virgin should conceive and bear a son, the name given to this Son is Immanuel, which signifies "God with us." Thus Messiah is represented as properly and truly God, and also living and dwelling with men; and in the next chapter of Isaiah he is spoken of under the same name as the Lord, and defender of the land of Judah. Job knew that in his day he *lived*: "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

In the 102d Psalm, as the Father's servant in the midst of his afflictions, he is introduced, saying, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days!" The answer of the Father to this prayer, as quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, immediately follows: "Thy years are throughout all generations; of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and



they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Thus creation is ascribed to Jesus Christ, the servant of the Father; and we know that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In the 45th Psalm, Messiah is thus addressed: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Here the name, the power, and the eternity of God, are ascribed to him.

Speaking of the place of his birth, the Prophet Micah says, Out of Bethlehem "shall he come forth, unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Isaiah says, ix. 10, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his government, (of which he says there shall be no end,) shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called—THE MIGHTY GOD."

Zechariah ii. 8—11, "For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you, for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. For behold I will shake mine hand upon them, and they



shall be a spoil to their servants; and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto thee." Here the speaker, who, in the 8th verse, is called Jehovah of hosts, declares that he is sent by another; but this other is afterwards said to be Jehovah.

Psalm cx. 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Lord Jesus Christ, when the Pharisees were disputing with him, asked him, Matt. xxii. 42—45, saying, "What think ye of Christ, whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" On this occasion, "the Pharisees were not able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." David was both a King and a



Prophet. David's Son could not then be David's Lord, in any other way but by a superiority of nature.

Messiah was also to be the Son of Man. Daniel vii. 13, 14, "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days; and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Respecting the Messiah's CHARACTER, the Prophets describe him as just, and having salvation; and yet lowly, "as not crying, nor lifting up his voice in the streets." Exercising his ministry with such circumspection and tenderness, as not "to break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax." "He was to feed his flock like a shepherd, to gather the lambs with his arms, and to carry them in his bosom, and gently to lead them that are with young." He was to be "fairer than the children of men, grace was to be poured into his lips; therefore God had blessed him for ever." He was to be God's "righte-



ous servant," and no "deceit was to be found in his mouth." "Behold," said God, "my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. Behold my servant shall deal prudently." How far this delineation by the Prophets of Messiah's character was verified, when he appeared in the world, need not be told to those who have read the history of his life.

In entering upon his OFFICE, in his public ministry, and claiming the character of the Messiah, which he supported by the miracles he wrought, and by the doctrine he taught, Jesus made use of the prophetic words by which it had been characterised by Isaiah. Isaiah lxi. 1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." The same prophet, speaking in Messiah's name, says, Isaiah l. 4, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Again he says, Isaiah xi. 1, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.



And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked; and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." Isaiah foretold that the poor among the people should rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. And in another place, declaring that God would come and save them, he says, Isaiah xxxv. 5, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

As a *Prophet*, in which character he had been predicted by Moses, he was to declare the words of God: Psalm xl. 9, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, lo I have not



refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness, and thy truth, from the great congregation." Both in declaring the words of God, and in foretelling future events, he proved himself to be a Prophet "mighty in deed and in word." The peculiar manner in which he was to teach, was also foretold. In the 72d Psalm, he is introduced saying, "Give ear, O my people, to my law, incline your hearts to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old."

In virtue of his office, an unchangeable *Priesthood* was also to belong to him. In the second Psalm, he is addressed as the Son of Jehovah, his Anointed; and in the 110th Psalm, speaking of him as David's Lord, it is said that Jehovah had sworn, and would not repent, that he was a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. When the legal sacrifices in Psalm xl. are declared to be of no avail, then the Messiah replied, "Lo I come, to do thy will, O my God." Accordingly, Isaiah represents him as pouring out his soul unto death, and making it an offering for sin. And, by Daniel, he is spoken of as



finishing transgression, making an end of sin-offering, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness. Thus it is foretold, that there should be "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." "As for thee also," says Jehovah, by the prophet Zechariah, "by the *blood* of thy covenant, I have sent forth my prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." He was to "make *intercession* for the transgressors." And "all nations were to be *blessed* in him."

It is predicted of him, that he was to be a Priest upon his throne, reigning as a *King*. Therefore, as a type of him, Joshua the High Priest was crowned, Zech. vi. 11, "Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech the High Priest; and speak unto him saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the **BRANCH**; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the Temple of the Lord, even he shall build the Temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory; and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a Priest upon his throne."

"Behold," says Isaiah, "a King shall reign in righteousness." In the second Psalm, he is addressed by Jehovah as his "King upon his holy



hill of Zion." He is spoken of as "ruling in the midst of his enemies." \* And as sitting "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever." Zion is called by the prophet Zechariah, at his approach, to rejoice : " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : Behold thy King cometh to thee ; he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." This was literally fulfilled when he went to Jerusalem for the last time. On that occasion, he rode on an ass's colt, and entered the city amidst the acclamations of multitudes.

The above characters are all applied in the New Testament to the Messiah, as exclusively belonging to him. When he appeared, he declared himself the " LIGHT OF THE WORLD." By his doctrine, and his resurrection, he brought life and immortality to light. He proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation to all without distinction. And he confirmed the truth he taught, by the

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\* " Ruling in the midst of his enemies," is a striking representation of power. Human governments can only subsist by destroying or banishing their enemies.



miracles he wrought. Superseding all other priests and sin-offerings, he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; he sanctified the people with his own blood; and ever liveth to make intercession for those whom God sent him to bless. He appeared as the King of Zion, from whence it was foretold that, in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, the rod of his power was to go forth. Isaiah ii. 3, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Thus his kingdom was to begin in Judea, and his government is shewn by the Prophets to include all the promised blessings of righteousness and stability, peace and security.

There are numerous prophecies which foretel the SUFFERINGS AND DEATH of the Messiah. The Prophets declare that he was to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Many were to be astonished at him, his visage was to be so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. The Psalmist testifying beforehand of his sufferings, says, "My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning,



my bones cleave to my skin.—Mine enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me, are sworn against me.—Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness.—I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me unto the dust of death.” Psalm xli. “Mine enemies speak evil of me: when shall he die, and his name perish? Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” This refers to Judas, who was to betray him. “The kings of the earth did set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord, and his Anointed.” “He was taken from prison, and from judgment. He was cut off out of the land of the living.”

The RESURRECTION of Messiah from the grave, and his subsequent exaltation, were likewise foretold by the prophets. In Isaiah xxv. 8, after promising to enlighten all nations, it is said that God “will swallow up death in victory.” By the prophet Hosea God says, “O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy de-



struction." Accordingly, it is declared by Isaiah, that after the soul of the Messiah was made an offering for sin, he "shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." These things are represented as happening after his death, and therefore plainly suppose his living after death. Ps. xlix. 15, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me." Ps. xvii. 15, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." His people are represented as exulting in him as their head risen from the grave on the third day. Hosea vi. 1, 2, "Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the *third* day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Isaiah xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live together, with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead." Here men are represented as attaining to a joyful resurrection from the dead, and that by virtue of the resurrection of the dead body of an extra-



ordinary person. In the 16th Psalm, referring to the short time he should remain in the grave, it is said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in the unseen state, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption; thou wilt shew me the path of life."

The EXALTATION of the Messiah is also declared by the prophets. As they represent him to be in a state of great humiliation during his life, so those prophecies which relate to his exaltation, must refer to his state after his death and resurrection. Psalm xxi. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever." In the 68th Psalm, it is said of him, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive." Psalm ii. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." When in the 24th Psalm it is enquired, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place?" And after the answer is given, describing the perfection of Messiah's character, admission into the heavenly world is demanded for him, under the title of the King of Glory. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory?"



The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle."

In the sublimest strains, the Prophets foretel the PROGRESS OF THE KINGDOM AND RELIGION of Messiah throughout the world, as bearing down all opposition, extending itself on every side, and at length becoming universal. Psalm cx. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool." "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion," "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." Isaiah lv. 4, "Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." Isaiah xlii. 6, 7, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and those that sat in darkness out of the prison house." The 60th chapter of Isaiah, from the beginning, contains the most magnificent promises to Zion through the Messiah, "the Holy One of Israel." "Behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall



arise on thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." The Prophets are full of this subject, and contemplate and anticipate with the greatest delight, the period when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." Daniel declares that the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, shall smite the image, and shall break it to pieces, and shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. This is that stone of which it is predicted that the builders should reject it, but that it should become the head of the corner. It represents him of whom it was foretold, that he was to be for a sanctuary, but "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel." This is that stone on which "whosoever shall fall shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to powder."

In the 72d Psalm, the *blessings*, the *equity*, and the *extent*, of Messiah's reign, are strikingly exhibited. "He shall judge the people with righteousness. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon



endureth. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight. He shall have dominion from sea to sea. All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen."

The 49th chapter of Isaiah describes, in a remarkable manner, the work of the Redeemer; the different reception he should meet with from Jews and Gentiles; the care of Jehovah over his people, and the enlargement of his kingdom. In the beginning of it, the Messiah, describing himself apparently with an allusion to his being the seed of the woman, is represented as addressing the uttermost parts of the earth to listen to him, as about to deliver a message of the highest importance. "Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people, from afar. The Lord hath called me from the womb; and he said, I will give thee for a light unto the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Verses 1—6, The



Messiah complains to Jehovah of the little effect of his ministry among the Jews; but an assurance is given him, that nevertheless it should be extensively successful. Verses 7—12, It is declared, that, notwithstanding the treatment he should at first experience, kings and princes should worship him; that Jehovah had heard him, and given him for a covenant to the people; and the blessed effects of his ministry are described, and the way that should be opened for it, where formerly there had been nothing but desolation and ignorance. Verse 13 is an animated address to the heavens and the earth to rejoice, on account of the great things that Jehovah was about to do. Verse 14, Zion, the church of God, on hearing this, and contrasting it with her present condition, is introduced, complaining that the Lord has forsaken her. Verses 15, 16, 17, God makes use of the strongest figures to convince Zion of her future increase, and of his protection. Verses 18, 19, Zion is called on to lift up her eyes; to look around and to see the multitude with which she should be adorned, crowding and gathering themselves to her. Jehovah assures her of this with an oath, and that even the desolate places of the earth, which, as being now under the dominion



of Satan, might be called the land of her destruction, should be too narrow for her, and those who opposed her should be far away. Verses 20, 21, Here she is informed of the enlargement of the numbers of her children from among the Gentiles, after she had lost her own children the Jews; and that she should inquire with astonishment, who had begotten her these, whence did they come, and where had they been, seeing she had lost her former children, had been desolate, a captive, and left alone. This was remarkably the case when the church at Jerusalem was scattered abroad. Zion was then desolate and left alone, forsaken and persecuted by those to whom she naturally looked as her children, and before she had received others. But these were the very means employed to effect the purposes of her gracious Lord. Verses 22, 23, Zion having inquired whence this multitude of children came, whom she now saw flocking to her, and by what means they were collected, Jehovah answers, and describes her future triumphs. Verse 24, Aware of the power of her enemies, and of the awful darkness in which the heathen world was involved, she again puts the question as if doubting the possibility of so great a change. Verses 24—27, Her doubts are answered. God him-



self will contend with them that contend with her, and will punish them to their destruction. He will make it manifest that he is her Saviour and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Besides the general strain of the prophecies respecting the Messiah, there are many minute particulars, towards the close of his life, which were foretold by the prophets, and are detailed in his history.

We have already observed one plain prediction concerning the treachery of Judas; and there are also several others in the Psalms, both as to his betraying his Master, his being deposed from his office, and his untimely end. The *five* circumstances of his bargaining for a sum, receiving the small price of thirty pieces of silver, casting them down, doing so in the temple, and the consequent purchase of the Potter's field, are predicted by Zechariah, xi. 12, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear: so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord."

When Jesus was betrayed by Judas, and seiz-



ed by the armed band, all the disciples forsook him and fled. Zechariah, xiii. 7, speaking of his sufferings, predicts this circumstance, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."

When Jesus was seized, he was taken before the Jewish rulers, who, after trying him, pronounced him guilty. Next morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against the Lord to put him to death; and when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. By Pilate the Roman governor, he was again tried and condemned. Here, then, is the work effected by the joint acts of Jews and Heathens. This concurrence is distinctly foretold in the 2d Psalm, 1, 2, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed." In the same Psalm it is added, 6—9, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee



the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The Roman and Jewish governments have indeed fulfilled this prediction. They have raged; they have imagined a vain thing; they have taken counsel together; they have set themselves against Jehovah and his Messiah. God has also carried his decree into effect. He has set his Messiah on his holy hill of Zion; he has declared him his only begotten Son; he has given him the earth to its utmost bounds for his possession, over which, to this hour, he is still extending his dominion—while, as with a rod of iron, he has dashed *them* in pieces like a potter's vessel. Jerusalem is destroyed. The Jews are scattered to the four winds, and the Roman empire is crumbled into dust. Never was a prediction more fully accomplished. Zion's question concerning the prey being taken from the mighty is now resolved, and the secret of her deliverance is disclosed.

After the trial of Jesus, they did spit in his face and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands. Isaiah l. 6, speaking of him, says, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair,



I hid not my face from shame and spitting." The Prophet Micah declares, "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek."

In the 22d Psalm, it is said, "They pierced my hands and my feet." In these words, it is intimated that he was to be put to death by crucifixion, the piercing the hands and the feet being peculiar to that kind of death. Crucifixion was never used among the Jews, as is plain from the books of Moses, where all the different kinds of punishments are mentioned, but nothing is said of crucifixion. It was unknown among them, not only in David's time, but for several ages after. The chief priests did not themselves pass sentence of death on Jesus Christ, they only found him guilty of blasphemy, and then alleged before the Roman governor that he had committed a crime against Cæsar, in pretending to be king of the Jews. By giving their accusation this form, they got him condemned to be crucified. And thus, contrary to all human probability, the prophecies which described the nature and manner of his death obtained their accomplishment.

When they led him to the place of crucifixion, Matthew says, xxvii. 34, "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall." This circum-



stance was also foretold. Psalm lxix. 20, 21, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

In the 22d Psalm, where so many of the particulars of the crucifixion of the Messiah are foretold, it is said, ver. 18, "They parted my garments among them, and casts lots upon my vesture." John xix. 23, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat;—now the coat was without seam woven from the top throughout. They said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not rend it; but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." While the casting lots for the upper garment of Jesus was thus an exact fulfilment of prophecy, it is remarkable in another respect. By the law, the high priest was commanded not to rend his clothes, Lev. x. 6. At the trial of Jesus, the high priest rent his clothes, which, being contrary to the law, violated for ever the authority of his priesthood. But the garment of Jesus, who was the true high priest, was left whole and entire.

In Psalm xxii. 7, 8, it is said, "All they that



see me, laugh me to scorn ; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." This was literally fulfilled when he hung upon the cross, as is particularly related, Matt. xxvii. 39—44, " They that passed, by reviled him, wagging their heads. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, he saved others, himself he cannot save. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth."

Matt. xxvii. 46, " And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" This is the very expression put into Messiah's mouth, in Psalm xxii.

John xix. 34, 35, " But one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." The piercing of his side ascertained his death. It was also the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice. This circumstance was foretold by Zechariah, speaking of him, chap. xii. 10, " And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced."



Mark xv. 27, "And with him they crucify two thieves, the one on his right hand and the other on his left." This was a deep laid piece of malignity, as nothing could have been contrived more effectually to discredit his pretensions, and to disgrace him. This circumstance is foretold, as well as his burial, by Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man. Isaiah liii. "And he was numbered with the transgressors.—He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Bishop Lowth translates the last passage, "And his grave was appointed with the wicked; but with the rich man was his tomb."

The soldiers brake the legs of those who were crucified on each side of him; but when they came to Jesus, they brake not his legs. Thus was fulfilled what was strictly enjoined and prefigured in the typical appointment of the passover, "A bone of him shall not be broken."

The whole of the 53d chapter of Isaiah contains a remarkable prediction of the Messiah, giving a most particular account of his Character, his Appearance, his Work and Reception, his Sufferings, his Atonement, and Success, interspersed with many minute Particulars respecting him. Neither its genuineness nor authenticity were ever doubted. It stands in the Jewish Scriptures the unques-



tioned production of the Prophet Isaiah, 700 years before the coming of Jesus Christ.

In the beginning of the preceding chapter, Zion is called upon to awake, to be clothed with strength; and Jerusalem, the holy city, to put on her beautiful garments. She is reminded that she had sold herself for nought, but now God would redeem her without money. "My people shall know my name in that day, for I am he, Jehovah, that promised; and lo, here I am." Their attention is then directed to the glorious messenger, bringing good tidings of peace and salvation. The watchmen who descry his approach raise the shout of exaltation, and all are commanded to break forth into joy, because Jehovah had comforted and redeemed his people, and had displayed his power before the whole earth. They are to go forth from their captivity, to contract no pollution, and those who convey back the vessels of the Lord are commanded to be clean. But they were not to go with precipitation, as if pursued by enemies and in danger, "for Jehovah shall march in your front, and the God of Israel shall bring up your rear." Next God's messenger is described, who should be highly extolled. On the one hand, his glory should be so obscured, that many would be asto-



nished at him; but, on the other hand, he should sprinkle many nations,\* and kings would listen to him with reverence. Much unbelief would, however, prevail. “Who,” exclaims the prophet, “hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed.” But this he immediately accounts for, by the outward low appearance of this messenger of God, which was before intimated, but which was to be so different from the expectation of the Jews, who looked for the Messiah to appear in circumstances of the greatest external grandeur. The prophet describes him as a root out of a dry ground, as having no form nor comeliness, “and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” Thus Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. The prophet goes on to declare that he is despised and rejected of men; and having mentioned that to the Jews he appeared to be judicially smitten of God, this gives an opportunity of introducing, in the remaining part of the prophecy, the Reason of his humiliation, the Circumstances connected with it, and the glorious Consequences that were to follow.

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\* Referring to the blood of atonement sprinkled on the mercy-seat.



So extraordinary and improbable a combination of circumstances, the greatest honours enjoyed, the utmost contempt experienced,—the meekness of the sufferer, who is highly extolled by Jehovah, yet forsaken and bruised by him under tokens of his heaviest displeasure,—the deepest debasement terminating in death, leading to exaltation crowned with unbounded success; all of this, first predicted and afterwards verified, attaches such a weight of evidence to this portion of Scripture, as nothing but eternal truth could supply.

Thus we have witnessed a surprising train of prophecies respecting the Messiah. It is not a detached intimation concerning him, but a connected series of predictions uttered during the space of 4000 years. At the beginning of that remote period, we meet with a compendious promise, which includes the outline of all that afterwards follows. This first promise is expressed in very general terms, which mentions a common benefit to all the sons of Adam. It was made before God had rejected Cain's posterity, by preferring that of Seth. It was given before the restriction was made to Noah in Seth's family, and to Shem in Noah's family. It was then made to Abraham, whom God distinguished by



circumcision from the rest of the family of Shem, with a declaration that it should be a blessing to all the nations of the world. It was next made to Isaac passing by Ishmael, and then to Jacob passing by Esau. It was next limited to one *tribe*, one small *town*, one *family*, and one particular *individual* in that family. The *time* of the birth of the Messiah is then fixed, and the appearance of the *messenger* who should precede him is foretold.

Many prophecies have likewise been pointed out referring to the Messiah's *Person*, *Character*, *Office*, *Sufferings*, *Death*, *Resurrection*, *Exaltation*, and the *Progress* of his religion; to the *Reception* he was to meet with from Jews and Gentiles; and to a number of minute and apparently contradictory particulars concerning him, which have been all fulfilled. These are contained in a book which is zealously preserved by the Jews, who are his most inveterate enemies, and which was also delivered into the hands of the whole civilized world, nearly 300 years before his appearance.

As the coming of Jesus Christ is so clearly pointed out in the Jewish Scriptures, it is of great importance to observe whether the determined and continued rejection of him by the Jewish nation, be founded on a distrust of the Divine inspi-



ration of these records, of which they are the keepers, or whether it does not wholly arise from their mistaken interpretation of them. In the former case, they would have produced little or no effect, and would have been kept by them, if preserved at all, probably to be made use of like the Sibylline books, or the pretended responses of the Heathen oracles, as a state engine, useful only to manage and overawe the multitude. But that this was not the light in which they viewed them, we have the most indubitable proof. No juggling deception, or underhand means, were employed to support the Jewish dispensation. In this, as in other respects, it was entirely different from the Heathen governments. The veil concealed the inner sanctuary from view, into which the High Priest entered alone. But all that it contained, and what he was to do there, as well as the particular interest the people had in his oblations, were fully made known to them. The Scriptures of the Old Testament were never intrusted only to the leaders, and kept back from the people, but were open to all, were read to all, and all were commanded to study them. Delivered to them in successive periods of their history, and recording events concerning themselves which that generation who received them wit-



nessed, the Jews never entertained the smallest doubt of the authenticity and divine authority of their scriptures. The care and veneration with which they have preserved them in all the vicissitudes of their wonderful history, in their many captivities and long dispersion, abundantly attest this fact. They have all along admitted the authority of the prophecies, and have constantly applied them to their expected Messiah, while their obstinacy in refusing him is also foretold by the prophets. It is therefore in their *misinterpretation* of the Scriptures alone, that we are to look for the cause of their rejection of the Messiah. This is a material point, an important link in the chain of evidence of the Divine origin of the Christian religion. Consistently with this view of the matter, and in full confirmation of it, a *general expectation* of the Messiah prevailed among the Jews, at the time of the appearance of Jesus Christ.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



































Haldane, Robert

The evidence and authority of divine revelation Being a view of the  
testimony of the law and the prophets to the Messiah, with the subsequent  
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